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GRANDET

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EUGÉNIE GRANDET.

IN some of the provinces of France may be remarked a certain class of houses which inspire a feeling of melancholy similar to that which the gloomiest cloisters, the most barren waste lands, or the most sombre ruins, invariably evoke. Not unfrequently, too, may be met with at the same time in houses of that character, not alone the silence of a cloister, but the sterility of a waste, and the cold, bleak nakedness of a ruin. Life and movement seem so torpid that a stranger would suppose them uninhabited, were he not suddenly to meet the cold, hard gaze of a motionless figure, whose half-monastic face, at the sound of an unknown step, peers forth beyond his window-sill.

Evidences of melancholy such as these existed in the appearance of a house situated at Saumur, at the end of the steep street which leads to the château at the upper part of the town. This street, now but little frequented, hot in summer, cold in winter, dark in certain parts, is remarkable for the echoing properties of its flint-paved roadway, always clean and dry, for the narrowness of its winding course, for the peaceful retired appearance of the

houses which belong to the old town, and which are overlooked by the ramparts. The houses, three hundred years old, are still solid, although constructed of wood; and their various aspects add to the originality which recommends that part of Saumur to the attention of antiquarians and artists. It is difficult to pass before those dwellings without admiring the enormous joists, with their fantastically carved ends, which, forming a black bas-relief, ornament the ground-floors of the greater number of them. Here, on the one hand, transverse beams of wood covered with slates trace their blue lines along the frail walls of a house, terminated by a pointed gable, which has yielded to the decay of time, and its shingled roof, completely rotted, has been displaced by the mingled action of the rain and sun. There, on the other hand, may be observed the sills of the warped and blackened windows, with their delicate carvings barely distinguishable, and which seem, indeed, too slight to support the brown earthen pot, gay with the carnations or the rose tree of the poor sempstress-girl living there; further on, doors studded with enormous nails, whereon the genius of our ancestors traced certain domestic hieroglyphics, the meaning whereof has long since been lost; at one time a Protestant has signed his faith in that way, at another a leaguer has similarly recorded his hate to Henry IV.; again, a bourgeois has registered there the badge of his civic dignities, the glory of his departed echevinage. The history of France may there be read in every mark.

Beside the tottering house, with its rough-worked panels, on which the workman has deified the implements of his craft, stands a handsome mansion, on whose semi-

circular architrave may still be seen the vestiges of the owner's armorial bearings, shattered and destroyed by the various revolutions which since the year 1789 have distracted the country. In this street the ground floors, appropriated to trading purposes, are neither shops nor warehouses; the admirers of the middle ages will find in them the workshop of our fathers in all its native simplicity. The low-pitched rooms are destitute of shop fronts; no display of goods is attempted, and there are no glass windows wherein to exhibit the wares; the rooms are deep, dark, and unornamented either externally or internally. An entrance is effected by means of a door divided into two parts, strongly bound with iron, the upper portion folding back towards the interior of the shop, and the lower portion, with a bell fastened to it, being continually opened and shut. This species of buried cave receives air and light from the top of the door, or through the open space between the ceiling and the small wall, breast high, where the massive shutters, which are taken down in the morning, but put up again in the evening, fit in, and are fastened with iron bars strongly bolted together. This wall serves the purpose of counters whereon to display the goods. There is an absence of all trickery about their sale. According to the nature of the trade carried on, the samples displayed consist of two or three tubs filled with salt and codfish, or of packages of canvas or cordage, of articles of ironmongery suspended from the joists of the ceiling, of hoops and coopers' work hanging against the walls, or of pieces of cloth arranged on the shelves.

Let us enter. A young girl, neat and tidy in her

person, blooming with youth, with her neckerchief white as snow, and red arms, puts aside her knitting, calls, as the case may be, her father or her mother, who advances and sells us whatever we may require, phlegmatically, obligingly, or independently, according to his or her natural disposition, be it to the value of a couple of sous or of twenty thousand francs. A wholesale dealer in staves for the manufacture of casks may be observed quietly seated at his door twirling his thumbs round and round, engaged in conversation with a neighbour. Apparently, all that he possesses consists of a few old boards and several bundles of laths, but on the quay lies his full timber-yard, which supplies all the coopers of Dijon : he knows almost to a single stave how many casks will be needed if the vintage be a good one. A continuance of fine weather makes his fortune, a rainy season is his ruin. In a single morning puncheons are either worth eleven francs, or they fall to six

In that district, as in Touraine, the alternations of the atmosphere influence and control commercial life. Vine-growers, landed proprietors, timber-merchants, coopers, innkeepers, bargemen, are all on the watch for a ray of sun ; they lie down to rest dreading they may learn the next morning that there has been a frost during the night ; they either fear the rain, wind, and drought, or they ardently desire a shower, heat, or clouds, each one according to his own fancy or interest : there is an unceasing warfare ever existing between the heavens and their worldly interests. The barometer alternately dejects, cheers, and enlivens the physiognomies of all. From one end to the other of the street we are describing—this time-worn

principal street of Saumur—these words, “ This is golden weather ! ” circulate from door to door ; whereupon every man accosts his neighbour with, “ It is raining louis,” well knowing how many of that coin a ray of sun or an opportune shower of rain may bring him.

On a Saturday, about ten o'clock in the day, in the height of the season, the purchase of a sou's worth of any commodity sold by any of these excellent tradesmen would be a matter of impossibility. Every man has his vine, his small plot of land, and has gone to spend a couple of days in the country, where—everything having been previously prepared, the purchase, sale, and profit, all arranged—the traders find that they have ten hours out of the twelve to spend in merry-making, in observations, comments, and endless gossipings. A housewife cannot buy a partridge without her neighbours asking her husband if it were well dressed. A young girl cannot look out of the window without being noticed by the various groups of idlers in the street.

There, indeed, human consciences are quite unveiled, and those impenetrable, gloomy, and silent houses are stripped of all their mystery. Life is almost altogether passed in the open air ; every family sits at its own door, breakfasts there, dines there, argues and discusses there. Not a soul passes in the street without being well studied ; so much so, indeed, that in former times, whenever a stranger arrived in a provincial town, he was made game of from door to door. Hence arose those amusing stories, and hence, too, the nickname of *copieux*, given to the inhabitants of Angers, who excelled in that peculiar kind of banter.

The ancient mansions of the old town are situated at the top of this street, and were formerly inhabited by the principal families of the country. The particular house, sombre and melancholy in appearance, wherein the events narrated in this story came to pass, was, in effect, one of these same mansions, the venerable remains of an age when men and things possessed that character of simplicity which French manners are now fast losing.

Having followed the windings of this picturesque road,—the slightest incidents of which awaken remembrance of the past, and the general effect whereof irresistibly induces a kind of mechanical train of thought—a break in the line of houses may be perceived, forming a recess, in the centre of which is concealed the door of *the house where Monsieur Grandet lives*. But it is impossible to appreciate the full force of this provincial expression, without furnishing the reader with the biography of Monsieur Grandet.

Monsieur Grandet enjoyed at Saumur a reputation the causes and effects of which it would be difficult to explain satisfactorily to those who have not lived, either a little or a good deal, in a provincial town. Monsieur Grandet (still called Père Grandet, by certain old persons whose number was perceptibly diminishing) was in 1789 a master cooper in perfectly easy circumstances, knowing how to read, write, and to cast accounts. At the time the French Republic offered for sale the estates in the *arrondissement* of Saumur belonging to the clergy, Père Grandet, at that period about 40 years of age, had just married the daughter of a wealthy timber-merchant. Furnished with all the ready money he possessed, fur-

nished with his wife's dowry, and furnished besides with 2,000 louis d'or, he proceeded to the locality where the property was to be disposed of, and where, by the agency of 200 double louis lent by his father-in-law, and presented to the fierce republican who presided over the sale of the national domains, he acquired for a mere song, legally if not legitimately, the most productive vineyards of the arrondissement, an old abbey, and several small farms.

As the inhabitants of Saumur were not very revolutionarily disposed, Père Grandet was regarded as a bold enterprising man, a republican, a patriot, a mind partial to new ideas; whereas the only idea the cooper had was simply that of entering upon the cultivation of the vine. He was nominated a member of the administration of the district of Saumur, and the effect of his pacific influence was felt both politically and commercially throughout it. Politically, he protected the *ci-devant*, and exerted his utmost influence to prevent the properties of the *émigrés* being sold. Commercially, he supplied the republican armies with one or two thousand casks of white wines, for which he was paid by the concession of certain rich meadows appertaining to a convent,—a property that had been reserved for a last lot.

Under the Consulate, Grandet became mayor, discharged his duties intelligently, and gathered his crops of grapes more satisfactorily still. Under the Empire, he was Monsieur Grandet. Napoleon, who had no partiality for the republicans, displaced Monsieur Grandet, who passed for having once had a tendency towards republican ideas, in favour of a large landed proprietor, a future baron of the Empire. Monsieur Grandet relinquished

his municipal honours without any regret. For the advantage of the town, he had had excellent roads constructed, which also led to his own properties. His house and his estates, which had been very advantageously surveyed and rated in the parish books, were assessed at a very moderate amount. From the classification of his different lands, his vines, thanks to the incessant care bestowed on them, had become the *head* of the country,—a technical word which served to indicate those vineyards which furnish the finest quality of wine. He would have been justified in claiming the cross of the Legion of Honour, an event which took place in 1806.

At that period, Monsieur Grandet was fifty-seven years of age, and his wife about thirty-six. They had an only daughter, the fruit of their marriage, about ten years old. Monsieur Grandet, whom Providence no doubt wished to console for his administrative disgrace, inherited, successively, during the above year, several fortunes; first, from Madame de la Bertellière, the mother of Madame Grandet, *née* De la Bertellière; next, of old Monsieur de la Bertellière, father of that deceased lady; and lastly, of Madame Gentillet, his grandmother on the maternal side: no one ever knew the extent of these three inheritances. The avarice of those three old people was so absorbing in its nature, that for a considerable time they had accumulated their money as if for the sole purpose of its secret contemplation. Old Monsieur de la Bertellière called an investment a prodigality, finding a far greater amount of interest in the sight of the gold, than any advantage to be gained by placing it out at usury. The town of Saumur. therefore, calculated the

value of the probable savings according to the income derivable from the properties the source of which they were acquainted with. To Monsieur Grandet, consequently, was accorded that new title of nobility which our mania for equality will never efface; he became the most important man in the arrondissement.

He cultivated vineyards of a hundred acres in extent, which in the years of good crops returned him seven or eight hundred casks of wine. He was the owner of thirteen farms, an old abbey, whose windows and ogees he had, from economical motives, bricked up; moreover, a hundred and twenty-seven acres of meadow land, on which three thousand poplar-trees, planted in 1793, were growing and flourishing; and lastly, the house in which he resided was his own: in this way a calculation as to the extent of his visible fortune was arrived at. As for the amount of his capital, only two persons could, even vaguely, form any idea of its importance; the one being Monsieur Cruchot, the notary, who was entrusted with Monsieur Grandet's usurious investments; the other, Monsieur de Grassins, the wealthiest banker of Saumur, in whose profits the vine-grower secretly participated whenever he felt disposed. But although old Cruchot and Monsieur de Grassins possessed that profound shrewdness which, in the provinces, creates confidence, and thereby ensures fortune, they publicly exhibited such extreme respect for Monsieur Grandet, that close observers could calculate the extent of the former mayor's capital by the obsequious consideration with which he was treated. There was not a single individual in Saumur who was not perfectly assured that Monsieur Grandet had a private

treasure—a secret hiding-place filled with louis, and that he nightly luxuriated in the ineffable delight which the contemplation of a large mass of gold is certain to produce. The avariciously inclined felt morally certain of it, when they looked at Monsieur Grandet's eyes, to which the yellow metal seemed to have communicated its hue. The look of a man accustomed to draw so enormous an interest from his capital necessarily contracts, like that of the voluptuary, the gambler, or the courtier, certain singular habits, certain furtive, restless, mysterious movements, which do not escape the attention of his fellow-worshippers. This secret language establishes in some respects a freemasonry of the passions.

Monsieur Grandet, consequently, inspired that respectful esteem in others to which a man can claim the right who owes no one a farthing; who, old cooper and old vine-grower as he was, could guess, with the accuracy of an astronomer, when it was necessary to provide a thousand puncheons for his crop, or only five hundred; who never entered into a losing speculation; who had always casks to sell whenever casks were dearer than the crop to be gathered; and who could lay up the produce of his vintage in his cellars, and await the opportunity of selling his stock at two hundred francs the cask, when the smaller proprietors were selling theirs at five louis. By his famous vintage of 1811, which had been judiciously husbanded and sparingly sold, he had realized more than two hundred and forty thousand livres. In a financial point of view, Monsieur Grandet had something of the tiger and of the boa-constrictor in his nature. He knew how to lie in wait, to crouch down, to keep his prey long

and fixedly in view, and then to spring upon it; after which, having opened the mouth of his purse, he swallowed therein a mass of crown-pieces, and tranquilly lay down, like the serpent which leisurely digests its food, impassive, cold, and dead to feeling.

No one saw him pass without experiencing a feeling of admiration, mingled with respect and terror. Had not every one in Saumur felt the polished laceration of his claws as sharp as steel? For one, Maître Cruchot had obtained the amount which was required for the purchase of an estate, *but* at eight per cent.; for another, Monsieur de Grassins had discounted certain bills of exchange, *but* with a terrible deduction for interest. Hardly a day passed without Monsieur Grandet's name being pronounced, either at the market or at one of the *soirées* of the town. There were certain persons for whom the fortune of the old vine-grower was the subject of a feeling of patriotic pride. Consequently, more than one trader more than one tavern-keeper, were in the habit of saying to strangers, with a certain satisfied air, "Monsieur, we have two or three very wealthy houses here; but as for Monsieur Grandet, even he himself hardly knows the extent of his own fortune."

In 1816, the shrewdest calculators of Saumur estimated the value of the good man's landed property to amount to nearly three millions of francs. But as, on an average, he must have drawn, from the year 1793 to 1817, a hundred thousand francs a-year from his estates, it is to be presumed that he was worth, in actual money, a sum nearly equal in amount to that of his landed property. And in this way, whenever, after a game at boston, the

conversation happened to turn upon the vintage, and Monsieur Grandet was alluded to, those who were capable of forming an opinion on the subject used to say, "Père Grandet cannot have less than five millions."

"You are cleverer than I am; for I have never been able to learn the total," replied either Monsieur Cruchot or Monsieur de Grassins, if either chanced to overhear the remark.

Whenever any one from Paris spoke of the Rothschilds or of Laffitte, the people of Saumur inquired whether they were as rich as Monsieur Grandet; and if the Parisian smilingly and somewhat disdainfully asserted the affirmative, they looked at each other, shaking their heads with an air of incredulity. So considerable a fortune covered, as with a mantle of gold, every action of this man's life. If, at first, certain personal peculiarities gave rise to ridicule and detraction, detraction and ridicule were soon worn out. In his slightest acts, Monsieur Grandet had on his side the weight of a final judgment in his favour. His merest word, his dress, his every gesture, the very winking of his eyes, as one may say, seemed to lay down the law for the whole district, where every man, having studied him as a naturalist studies the effects of instinct among animals, had, in course of time, been able to recognize the profound and reserved sagacity which governed his slightest action.

"We shall have a sharp winter," said one of them, "for Père Grandet has put on his warm gloves. We must begin to get our grapes gathered."

"Père Grandet seems to be getting a good many cask-staves ready; there will be a good vintage this year."

Monsieur Grandet never purchased any meat or bread. His tenants brought him every week a sufficient supply of capons, fowls, eggs, butter, and corn for the week's consumption. He possessed a mill, rented by a miller who was obliged, over and above the rent reserved by the lease, to fetch a certain quantity of grain, and take back the bran and flour to him. The portly Nanon—the only servant he kept, although no longer a young woman—baked every Saturday a sufficient quantity of bread for the whole house during the week. Monsieur Grandet had made arrangements with such of his tenants as were kitchen gardeners, to supply him with vegetables. As for fruit, he himself gathered it in such vast quantities that he sold a considerable portion of it in the market. His firewood was cut from his own hedges, or taken from the old half-rotten fences which he cleared away from the borders of his fields. His tenants carted it into town for him, obligingly arranged it in his wood-house, and were well paid in thanks. His only known items of expenditure were the consecrated bread, his wife's and his daughter's clothing, and the expense of their sittings at church, the Chandler's bill, Nanon's wages, the tinning of his saucepans, the payment of the rates and taxes, repairs of his buildings, and the expenses of the cultivation and improvement of his estates. He had recently purchased three hundred acres of woodland, but these, under the promise of a gratuity for his trouble, he induced one of his neighbour's gamekeepers to look after; and since that acquisition only had he eaten game.

The manners of this man were extremely simple. He spoke but little, and generally expressed his thoughts by

short sententious phrases, uttered in a soft, gentle voice. Since the revolution—the period when he had attracted the attention of all—Grandet stammered in a very disagreeable manner whenever he had occasion to speak for any length of time, or to keep up a discussion. But this defect—his disconnected sentences, his rapid flow of words, in which he drowned his thoughts, his apparent want of logical reasoning, attributed to a fault in his education, were all assumed, and will be satisfactorily explained by certain incidents and events in this story. Moreover, there were four phrases as unvaried as algebraic formulas, which he made use of on all occasions, for the purpose of disposing of the various difficulties of life as well as of business, viz., “I do not know,” “I cannot,” “I will not,” “We will see.” He never said either *yes* or *no*, and never wrote.

When spoken to, he listened with cold attention, holding his chin in his right hand, and leaning the elbow of his right arm in the palm of his left hand. He formed opinions on every subject, which he never altered. He reflected profoundly on the smallest matter of business he took in hand; and when, after a very long and full conversation, his adversary had exposed to him the secret of the pretensions he may have entertained, thinking that he had secured his listener, the reply he received was, “I cannot decide until I have consulted my wife.” His wife, whom he had reduced to a complete state of subjection, was, in all matters of business, made use of as a most convenient screen. He never visited at any one’s house, nor would he ever receive or invite another to dine at his own.

He was always composed and collected in his manners,

and seemed to be chary of everything, even of his movements. He never disarranged anything at other people's houses, from the scrupulous regard he had for the rights of property. And yet, notwithstanding the soft, low tones in which he spoke, and notwithstanding his reserved manners, the language and habits of the old cooper at times betrayed themselves, especially when at home in his own house, where he felt himself under less restraint than anywhere else.

With regard to his personal appearance, Grandet was a man about five feet in height, of a squat, square figure, with the calves of his legs about twelve inches in circumference, with large knee-pans and broad shoulders. His face was full, tanned, and marked with the small-pox. His chin was straight, his lips were marked by the absence of any curve in their shape, and his teeth were white. His eyes possessed that steady and fascinating expression which is attributed to the basilisk. His forehead, strongly marked with transverse lines, was not deficient in developments pregnant with meaning. His hair, a mixture of yellow and grey, looked like silver and gold, as certain young persons said, who were not aware of the seriousness of a jest made at Monsieur Grandet's expense. His nose, thick at the end, was ornamented with a knob or wen full of veins, which the common people said, and not without reason too, was full of humour. Upon the whole, his face indicated a man of the most dangerous cunningness of character, of the most unimpassioned probity of conduct—the egotism of one accustomed to concentrate all the feelings of his nature upon the enjoyment which

the passion of avarice afforded, and upon the only being in the world for whom he really entertained any regard—his daughter Eugénie, his only child and heiress. His bearing, his manners, his very walk, everything, indeed, bore testimony to that perfect confidence in himself which the fact of unfailing success in all his undertakings had enabled him to assume. But, although his manners were easy and gentle in appearance, Monsieur Grandet was as hard as bronze. Always dressed in the same style, any one who saw him to-day saw him the same as he had ever been since 1791. His strong shoes were fastened with leathern strings; whatever the weather might be, he invariably wore thick woollen stockings, short knee-breeches, of coarse snuff-coloured cloth, with silver knee-buckles; a yellow and puce-coloured striped velvet waistcoat buttoned across his chest; a full-sized dress coat, also snuff-coloured, with long wide skirts, a black neckerchief, and a quaker's hat. His gloves, as stout and thick as those which gendarmes wear, lasted him twenty months; and, in order to keep them clean, he invariably placed them on the brim of his hat, in the same place, in the most methodical manner. Beyond these particulars, Saumur knew nothing whatever about him.

Six only of the residents of Saumur had the right of visiting at his house. The most important of the three first was the nephew of Monsieur Cruchot. Since his nomination as President of the Tribunal de Première Instance at Saumur, this young man had added to the name of Cruchot that of De Bonfons, and did his utmost to give the name of De Bonfons the precedence of that

of Cruchot. He already signed his name "C. de Bonfons." The suitor, who was inconsiderate enough to call him Monsieur le Président Cruchot, soon perceived, before his case was over, the mistake he had committed. The magistrate favourably noticed those who called him Monsieur le Président; but he distinguished with his most gracious smiles, and with the most marked attention, those flatterers who addressed him as Monsieur de Bonfons. Monsieur le Président was about thirty-three years of age, the proprietor of Bonfons (*Bon Fontis*), an estate producing him about seven thousand francs a-year; and was looked upon as the heir presumptive of his uncle the notary, and of his uncle the Abbé Cruchot, a dignitary of the chapter of Saint Martin de Tours, both of whom passed for being tolerably rich. These three Cruchots, supported by a large number of cousins, connected with twenty different families in the town, formed a party, as in former times the Pazzi did at Florence; and, like the Pazzi, the Cruchots had their enemies.

Madame de Grassins, the mother of a son of three-and-twenty years of age, went, with the most unremitting attention, to play at cards with Madame Grandet in the hope that she might make up a match between "her dear Adolphe" and Mademoiselle Eugénie. Monsieur de Grassins, the banker, promoted and abetted his wife's manœuvres in the most vigorous manner, by numerous services secretly rendered to the old miser, and arrived upon the field of battle always in good time. These three De Grassins had equally their adherents—their cousins, their faithful allies.

On the side of the Cruchots, the abbé, the little Talleyrand of the family, well supported by his brother the notary, disputed most earnestly every inch of ground with the financier, and tried his utmost to secure the rich inheritance for his nephew the President. This secret contest between the Cruchots and the De Grassins, of which Eugénie Grandet was the prize, excited the attention of the different visiting circles of Saumur in the most intense manner. "Will Mademoiselle Grandet marry Monsieur le Président or Monsieur Adolphe de Grassins?" Some endeavoured to solve this problem by saying that Monsieur Grandet would not give his daughter to either the one or the other. The old cooper, eaten up by ambition, would look out, they said, for some peer of France as a son-in-law, who, for the sake of the two hundred thousand francs annual income, would forget and forgive the past, present, and future casks and hog-heads of the Grandets. Others rejoined that Monsieur and Madame de Grassins were noble and extremely rich; that Monsieur Adolphe was a very well-favoured and agreeable young man; and that, unless Grandet had a nephew of the Pope himself in his sleeve, a marriage, so suitable in every respect, ought to satisfy people who, like the Grandets, had sprung from nothing, — a man whom every one in Saumur had seen with his axe in his hand, and who, moreover, had belonged to the republican party.

The more sagacious observers drew attention to the fact that Monsieur Cruchot de Bonfons had permission to visit the house at any hour and day he liked, while his rival was only admitted on the Sundays. The one

set persisted that Madame de Grassins was too clever and shrewd a woman to fail in her efforts, while the other retorted that the Abbé Cruchot was a man of the most insinuating address in the world, and that, woman against monk, the game was equal. "It is frock against frock," said one of the wits of Saumur.

The older heads of the district, better informed on the subject, pretended that the Grandets were too prudent and cautious to allow their property to go out of the family; and, according to these old folks' notions, Mademoiselle Eugénie Grandet of Saumur would be married to the son of Monsieur Grandet of Paris, a wealthy wholesale wine-merchant. To this the Cruchotins and the Grassinists replied:—"In the first place, the two brothers have not seen each other twice during the last thirty years; in the next, Monsieur Grandet of Paris has more exalted ideas for his son. He is mayor of an arrondissement, a deputy, a colonel of the National Guard, and judge of the Tribunal of Commerce; he disowns the Grandets of Saumur, and expects, through the favour of Napoleon, to be able to form an alliance with some ducal family." What, indeed, will not people say of an heiress whom every one is talking about within a circuit of twenty leagues, even in the public conveyances from Angers to Blois included?

At the beginning of the year 1818, the Cruchotins obtained a signal advantage over the Grassinists. The estate of Froidfond, celebrated for its park, its beautiful château, its farms, river, ponds and forests, and valued at three millions of francs, was offered for sale by the young Marquis de Froidfond, who was obliged to realize

all the money he could. Maître Cruchot, the President Cruchot, and the Abbé Cruchot, with the assistance of their adherents, hit upon a means of preventing the sale in small separate lots. The notary concluded an excellent bargain with the young man, by persuading him into the belief that a great number of legal proceedings would require to be taken against the separate purchasers of the different lots before he could obtain the payment of the purchase-money from them; and that it would be far better to sell the property to Monsieur Grandet, a moneyed man, who was capable, besides, of paying for the estate in ready money. The beautiful Marquisate de Froidfond was thereupon transferred to the maw of Monsieur Grandet, who, to the great astonishment of Saumur, paid for it, after deducting the discount, in full accordance with the usual formalities. The report of this affair spread as far as Nantes and Orleans. Monsieur Grandet went to look at his château, availing himself of an opportunity of a cart which was returning there.

Having bestowed upon his newly acquired property the glance of a master-mind, he returned to Saumur, satisfied that his investment would repay him five per cent. interest, and conceived the magnificent idea of increasing the Marquisate of Froidfond by joining all his other estates with it. In order, however, to replenish his now almost exhausted treasury, he determined to cut his woods and forests down to the ground, and to turn the poplars of his meadow land to the best possible advantage.

From the particulars we have just detailed, the value

of the phrase, "*Monsieur Grandet's house*," may easily be understood; that dull, cold, silent-looking house, situated at the top of the town, and sheltered by the ruins of the ramparts.

The two pillars and the arch, forming together the bay of the porch, had, like the house, been constructed of tufa, a white stone peculiar to the banks of the Loire, and so soft that its average duration hardly amounts to two hundred years. Numerous holes, of unequal size, which the variableness of the climate had fantastically wrought in the stone, gave to the crown of the arch and the jambs of the bay the appearance of the vermiculated stones used in French architecture, and bore some resemblance to the entrance to a gaol. Above the crown of the arch was a long bas-relief of hard stone, on which figures had once been sculptured, representing the four seasons, but now were worn away and perfectly blackened by time. This bas-relief was surmounted by a projecting stringcourse, on which many specimens of vegetable life were growing, of the wallflower, bindweed, and convolvulus tribes, and even a small cherry-tree which had attained a tolerable height.

The door, of massive oak, almost black, dried and cracked in all directions, and frail in appearance, was, however, well and securely fastened by a set of bolts of very symmetrical patterns. A small square grating, well secured by bars and discoloured by rust, occupied the middle of the house-door, and served as a plate for a knocker which was fastened to it by a ring and which struck upon the grinning head of a large nail. The knocker in question, of an oblong shape, belonged to

that class which was termed by our ancestors "Jacquemart," and resembled, in fact, a large note of admiration. From a careful examination of it, an antiquary might have detected some indications of a face which bore evidence of having formerly been of a grotesque character, but which long usage had worn away. Through the little grating, destined, in days gone by, for the recognition of friends in times of civil war, those who were pryingly disposed could see, at the end of a dark and mildewed-looking passage, several broken steps leading into a garden, surrounded, in a picturesque manner, by thick, damp walls, from which the moisture exuded fast, and whereon small shrubs of sickly appearance grew as they could. The walls we speak of were those of the ramparts on which the gardens of several adjoining houses had been formed.

The largest room on the basement storey of the house was a *salle* or parlour, the entrance to which was under the archway of the *porte-cochère*, or carriage entrance. Few persons know the importance which is attached to a *salle* in the small towns of the provinces of Anjou, of La Touraine, and of Berri. The *salle* answers the purpose of an antechamber, a drawing-room, cabinet, boudoir, and dining-room; it is the theatre of domestic life, the household fireside: there, the hairdresser of the neighbourhood makes his appearance twice a-year to cut Monsieur Grandet's hair; there, too, the tenants, the *curé*, the *sous-préfet*, and the miller's man enter on their several errands. The floor of this room, with its two windows looking out upon the street, was boarded over; the walls were panelled, of a grey colour, with antique

mouldings, and were wainscoted from the top to the bottom ; the ceiling was apparently traversed by beams similarly painted in grey, and the intermediate spaces filled up with white plaster, which had become yellow from age. An old brass clock, inlaid with arabesques in tortoise-shell, ornamented the indifferently-carved mantelpiece of white stone, which supported a greenish-coloured mirror, the sides of which, bevelled for the purpose of showing its thickness, reflected a stream of light the whole length of a gothic pier-glass opposite of Damascus steel. The two gilt girandoles, which decorated each corner of the mantelpiece, answered two purposes ; for, on removing the roses from each, a socket was inserted, which allowed the principal branch to be fitted into the pedestal of bluish-looking marble, and the whole together formed a candelabrum for grand receptions.

The seats around the room, of an old-fashioned form, were covered with worsted work, depicting some of La Fontaine's fables ; but an acquaintance with that writer's works was necessary to enable any one to discover the meaning of the subjects ; for the faded colours and the frequency of the repairs rendered the recognition of the figures very difficult. At the four angles of this *salle* were placed four sideboards. An old card-table, in marqueterie, the top of which was adapted for a chess-board, was placed against the wall, between the two windows. Above this table was suspended an oval-shaped barometer with a black border, ornamented with gilt bows or knots of carved wood, which had been so shamefully treated by the flies that the gilding was

merely conjectural. Hanging against the wall, opposite to the fireplace, were two portraits, in crayons, reputed to be the likenesses of the grandfather of Madame Grandet, old Monsieur de la Bertellière, as a lieutenant of the French Guards, and the late Madame Gentillet as a shepherdess. The two windows were hung with curtains of red *gros de Tours*, looped up by silk cords with large tassels. This luxurious decoration, so little in harmony with Grandet's usual habits, had been included in the purchase of the house, as well as the pier-glass, the clock, the pieces of furniture in needlework, and the rose-wood sideboards.

In the recess of the window nearest to the door, stood a straw-bottomed chair, under the legs of which pieces of wood had been placed, in order to raise Madame Grandet sufficiently high to enable her to see the passers in the street. A work-table of cherry-wood, which had utterly lost its colour, filled up the recess, and Eugénie Grandet's little chair was placed close beside it. For fifteen years had the mother and daughter quietly passed their days in this spot, constantly at work, from the month of April to the month of November. On the first of this latter month they could take up their winter station by the fireside, as that was the earliest day on which Grandet allowed a fire to be lighted in the *salle*, discontinuing it on the 30th of March, without paying the slightest regard either to the early chills of the spring or to those of the autumn. A brazier, the heat of which was kept up with the embers from the kitchen fire, which Nanon managed to save for them by dint of a little manœuvring, enabled Madame and Mademoiselle Grandet to put up with the

cold mornings and evenings of the months of April and October. The mother and daughter mended all the linen used in the house ; and so conscientiously did they employ all their time during the day in this labour, which should have been the work of a hired needle-woman, that when Eugénie wished to embroider a collar for her mother, she was obliged to deprive herself of the time which ought to have been given to rest, and to deceive her father for the purpose of obtaining a light from him to work by. For a long time past the miser had given out the candles to his daughter and Nanon, just as he doled out, every morning, the bread and necessary food for daily consumption.

La Grande Nanon, as she was called, was probably the only human creature capable of submitting to her master's despotic rule. The whole town envied Monsieur and Madame Grandet's possession of her. La Grande Nanon, so called on account of her height of five feet eight inches, had been in Monsieur Grandet's service for thirty-five years. Although her wages did not amount to more than sixty livres a-year, she was looked upon as one of the richest servants in Saumur. The accumulation on these sixty livres for a period of thirty-five years had enabled her very recently to place four thousand livres in Monsieur Cruchot's hands for investment. This result of the Grande Nanon's continuous and persevering thriftiness seemed gigantic. Every other servant in the town, seeing that the poor sexagenarian had secured the means of providing herself with bread during the latter days of her life, felt jealous of her, forgetful of the hard slavery by which it had been acquired. At the age of twenty-two

eating the plums or nectarines from the trees. "Come, Nanon, enjoy your fill," he used to say in those years when the boughs were so weighed down by the quantity of the fruit that the farmers were obliged to feed their pigs on it.

For a friendless peasant-girl, who, early in her youth, had received only harsh treatment—for a poor destitute girl, taken in out of charity, Père Grandet's equivocal laugh was a perfect ray of sunlight. Besides, Nanon's simple heart and simple mind had only room for one feeling and one idea. Not once, for five-and-thirty years, had she forgotten the day when she arrived before Père Grandet's timber-yard, bare-footed and in rags; and she still heard the cooper saying to her, "Well, what do you want, my girl?" and her gratitude was always a fresh and active principle within her. At times Grandet, reflecting that this poor creature had never had the most ordinarily complimentary phrase addressed to her, that she was ignorant of all the softer emotions which woman inspires, and would one day appear before God as chaste as any woman that had ever breathed, Grandet, overcome by feelings of pity, said, as he looked at her, "Poor Nanon!" an exclamation which was invariably followed by an indefinable look bent by the old servant upon her master. This phrase, repeated from time to time, formed for a long period a chain of uninterrupted friendship, to which every repetition of that exclamation added a fresh link. This feeling of pity, which had taken root in Grandet's heart, and which was received in perfectly good part by his old servant, had something almost horrible in it. That wretched miserly feeling of pity

which awakened a thousand agreeable sensations in the heart of the old cooper, constituted Nanon's whole source of earthly happiness. Who, too, will not say, "Poor Nanon!" as well? God will recognize his angels by the inflexion of their voices, and by the mystery of their regrets.

Saumur contained a vast number of families where the servants were better treated, but where the masters, nevertheless, were by no means satisfied with them; and on that account another phrase arose,—“What do the Grandets do to the Grande Nanon, to make her so attached to them? She would go through fire for them.”

Her kitchen, with its iron-barred windows looking out upon the court-yard, was always clean, neat, cold,—a perfect specimen of a miser's kitchen, in which not a single thing should be allowed to be lost. As soon as Nanon had washed up the plates and dishes which had been used at dinner, had locked up what had been left, and put out the fire, she quitted the kitchen, which was separated from the *salle* by a lobby, and, taking her seat not far from her master and mistress, began to spin. A single candle was sufficient for the family during the whole evening. The servant slept at the end of the lobby we have alluded to, in a closet which was lighted by a small window from the lobby itself. Her robust health enabled her to set at defiance the ill-effects likely to arise from this kind of den, whence she could hear the slightest sound, owing to the profound silence which reigned night and day throughout the house. Like a watch-dog, her duty was to sleep with only one ear closed, and to rest and watch at the same moment.

The description of the other parts of the house will be found connected with the events of this story ; but the sketch we have given of the *salle*, in which the greatest display was made which the house was capable of affording, will enable an idea to be formed of the nakedness of the rooms in the upper stories.

In 1819, early in the evening of the 17th November, the Grande Nanon lighted the fire for the first time. The autumn had been exceedingly fine. The day in question was one with which the Cruchotins and the Grassinists were exceedingly well acquainted, and, accordingly, the six antagonists were preparing themselves, armed at all points, to meet in the *salle*, and to outdo one another in demonstrations of friendship. In the morning, all Saumur had seen Madame and Mademoiselle Grandet, accompanied by Nanon, on their way to the parish church to attend mass ; and every one remembered that that day was the anniversary of the birth of Mademoiselle Eugénie. Calculating the hour, therefore, when the dinner would be finished, Maître Cruchot, the Abbé Cruchot, and Monsieur C. de Bonfons did their best to arrive before the Des Grassins, for the express purpose of offering their congratulations to Mademoiselle Grandet. All three were the bearers of enormous bouquets gathered from their gardens. The stalks of the flowers which the President was about to present were very prettily tied with white satin ribbon, trimmed with gold fringe.

In the morning, Monsieur Grandet, according to his usual custom on such eventful occasions as the birthday and fête-day of Eugénie, had gone to her bedroom before

she had risen, and had solemnly given her his paternal present, which, for the past thirteen years, had consisted of a double golden napoléon. Madame Grandet generally made her daughter a present of a winter or a summer dress, according to circumstances. These two dresses, the four napoléons, and two other pieces of gold which she received on New Year's day and on her father's fête-day, formed an income for her of about a hundred crowns, which M. Grandet was delighted to see her hoard up. Was not this like putting his money from one cash-box into another, and, as one may say, fostering the avarice of his heiress, whom he sometimes asked for an account of her little store, which had some years before been increased by the Bertellières, saying to her, "This will be your marriage *douzaine*."

The *douzaine*, or "dozen," is an ancient custom still in force, and religiously observed in certain parts of the centre of France. In Berri and Anjou, whenever a young girl marries, it is usual for her family, or that of her future husband, to present her with a purse containing, according to the position and fortunes of the families, twelve pieces, or twelve dozen pieces, or twelve hundred pieces of silver or gold. The poorest peasant-girl would not marry without her dozen, even were it composed only of sou pieces. People still talk at Issoudun of I can hardly now remember what dozen which had been presented to a wealthy heiress, and which contained a hundred and forty-four golden Portuguese coins. Pope Clement, the uncle of Catherine de Medicis, made her a present, on her marriage with Henry II., of a dozen ancient gold medals of the greatest value.

During the dinner, the father, overjoyed at seeing his Eugénie looking so pretty in her new dress, had exclaimed, "Well, since this is Eugénie's fête-day, let us have a fire lighted : it will be a good omen."

"Mademoiselle will be sure to be married within the year," said the Grande Nanon, as she removed from the table the remains of a goose they had had for dinner, a dish which the class of people to which the cooper belonged look upon in the light of game.

"I don't know where to find a suitable match for her in Saumur," replied Madame Grandet, looking at her husband with a timid air, which, considering her age, testified the complete state of conjugal subjection under which the poor woman suffered.

Monsieur Grandet looked at his daughter, and exclaimed gaily, "The girl is twenty-three to-day ; and so we must soon occupy ourselves about it."

Eugène and her mother silently exchanged a glance of intelligence.

Madame Grandet was a lean, impoverished-looking woman, yellow as a quince, awkward and listless in all her movements ; one of those women, in a word, who seem made to be tyrannized over. She had large bones, a large nose, a large forehead, large eyes, and, at first sight, offered a vague resemblance to those spongy fruits which are destitute both of flavour and juice. Her teeth, of which she had but few, were black, her mouth puckered up in wrinkles, and her chin was long and peaked. She was an excellent woman, and a born La Bertellière. The Abbé Cruchot managed to find occasional opportunities of telling her that she had not been so bad looking ; and

she believed him. An angelic gentleness of manner, a resignation like that of an insect tormented by children, singular piety, and most unfaltering evenness of mind, and a good heart, made her universally pitied and respected. Her husband never gave her more than six francs at a time for her personal expenses.

Although her appearance excited ridicule, this woman, who, by her own fortune and the fortunes to which she had succeeded, had brought Père Grandet more than three hundred thousand francs, always felt herself so deeply humiliated by a dependence and subjection against which her gentle disposition precluded her from protesting, that she had never asked for a sou, nor made a remark about the documents which Maître Cruchot submitted to her for her signature. This foolish secret pride, this high-minded generosity of sentiment, constantly misunderstood and wounded by Monsieur Grandet, influenced the conduct of this poor woman on all occasions.

She invariably wore a silk dress, of a greenish hue, which she usually made last her nearly a twelvemonth, and wore also a large neckerchief of thick white muslin, and a straw bonnet, and seldom took off her black silk apron. As she rarely went out, she hardly ever required new shoes. And so Monsieur Grandet, sometimes seized with a feeling of remorse when he remembered the long period that had elapsed since he had last given his wife her six francs, always stipulated for what he termed pin-money for his wife when he sold his year's produce. The four or five lous with which the Dutch or Belgian purchaser of Grandet's vintage presented him formed the most available source of Madame Grandet's income.

But when she had received her five louis, her husband frequently said to her, as if their purse was in common, "Have you a few sous to lend me?" and the poor woman, delighted at an opportunity of doing something for the man whom her confessor had bade her regard as her lord and master, gave him back, in the course of the winter, sundry crown pieces out of her pin-money.

Whenever Monsieur Grandet took out of his pocket the hundred-sous piece which he doled out every month for such trifling expenses as thread, needles, and articles of dress for his daughter, he never omitted, after he had buttoned up his pockets, to say to his wife, "Well, mother, do you want anything?"

Madame Grandet, animated by a feeling of maternal dignity, replied, "I will see about it, M. Grandet."

Sublimity of feeling misapplied! for Monsieur Grandet thought he was acting very generously toward his wife. Are not those philosophers who fall in with such persons as the Nanons, Madame Grandets, and Eugénies of life, correct in their assertion that irony is the foundation of the character of Providence?

After the dinner, when the question of Eugénie's marriage was first alluded to, was finished, Nanon, having lighted the fire, had gone to fetch a bottle of cordial out of Monsieur Grandet's room, and almost lost her footing as she was coming down stairs.

"Stupid thing!" said her master to her, "are you going to tumble like any one else—you, of all people?"

"Monsieur, it was that loose step on the staircase."

"She is quite right," said Madame Grandet. "You

should have had it mended a long time ago. Yesterday, Eugénie almost sprained her foot there."

"Well," said Monsieur Grandet to Nanon, seeing her look quite pale, "since it is Eugénie's birthday, and you nearly fell down, take a small glass of cordial."

"And I think I have very well earned it, too," said Nanon. "Many people in my place would have broken the bottle; but I would sooner have broken my elbow by holding the bottle in the air."

"Poor Nanon!" said Monsieur Grandet, as he poured her out the cordial.

"You hurt yourself, I am sure," said Eugénie, looking at her affectionately.

"No, for I saved myself from falling by throwing myself back."

"Well, then, since it is Eugénie's birthday," said Monsieur Grandet, "I will mend the step for you. But none of you seem to know how to put your foot in the corner just where the step is still firm."

Monsieur Grandet took the candle, leaving his wife, daughter, and servant without any other light than that which the bright sparkling fire threw out, and went to an outhouse to look for a piece of board, some nails, and his tools.

"Shall I help you?" cried out Nanon, hearing him knocking on the staircase.

"No, no, it is nothing new to me," replied the old cooper.

At the very moment Monsieur Grandet was engaged in mending his rotten staircase, and whistling with all his might at the recollection of his earlier days, the three Cruchots knocked at the door.

"Is that you, Monsieur Cruchot?" said Nanon, looking through the wicket.

"Yes," replied the President.

Nanon opened the door; and the light of the fire, which was reflected under the gateway, enabled the three Cruchots to perceive the entrance to the *salle*.

"Ah! you're holiday-making, I see," said Nanon to them, as she smelt the flowers.

"I ask your pardon, gentlemen," cried Grandet, recognizing his friends' voices; "I will be with you directly. I am not above mending one of the steps of my staircase."

"Go on, go on, Monsieur Grandet; even the charcoal-burner is master in his own house," said the President sententiously, laughing at his own joke.

Madame and Mademoiselle Grandet rose as they entered the *salle*. The President thereupon, taking advantage of the obscurity, said to Eugénie, "Will you allow me, Mademoiselle, to wish you, on this the anniversary of the day of your birth, a long succession of happy years, and a continuance of your present health."

And he presented her with a large bouquet of flowers, rare for Saumur, and then, pressing her by the elbows, kissed her on both sides of the neck, with a warmth which made Eugénie feel quite ashamed. The President, who looked like a large rusty nail, thought this a proper way of paying his addresses.

"Don't stand upon any ceremony," said Monsieur Grandet, as he entered the room. "You seem to make yourself at home on fête-days, Monsieur le Président."

"With Mademoiselle," replied the Abbé Cruchot

offering his bouquet, "every day would be a fête-day for my nephew;" and he kissed Eugénie's hand. As for Maître Cruchot, he kissed the young girl simply on both her cheeks, saying, "How we are getting on! A year every twelve months."

As he placed the candle before the clock, Grandet, who never got tired of a joke, but repeated it over and over again whenever it seemed particularly good, said, "Since it is Eugénie's birthday, we will have the candles lighted."

He thereupon carefully removed the branches from the candelabra, put the socket in each pedestal, took a fresh candle from Nanon's hands, placed a piece of paper round it, pressed it down in the socket, fixed it in tightly, lighted it, and then went and sat down beside his wife, looking alternately at his friends, his daughter, and the two candles.

The Abbé Cruchot, a little, fat, plump man, wearing a red straight perruque, with a face like a confirmed old female gamester, said, as he stretched out his feet, shod with strong shoes with silver buckles, "The Des Grassins have not come?"

"Not yet," said Grandet.

"But they are coming?" asked the old notary, with a grimace on his face, which was as full of holes as a colander.

"I believe so," said Madame Grandet.

"Have you got all your vintage in?" inquired the President de Bonfons of Grandet.

"Everywhere!" said the old vine-grower, getting up and walking to and fro in the *salle*, and throwing back his head with a movement full of pride at the word *everywhere*.

Through the door of the passage which led into the kitchen he observed Nanon, seated close to the fire, with a candle beside her, and beginning to spin there, so as to avoid interfering with the company.

"Nanon," he said, going out into the passage, "why don't you put out your fire and your candle, and come and sit with us? *Pardieu!* the *salle* is large enough for us all."

"But, monsieur, you are going to have company!"

"Are you not quite as good as they are? They are descended from Adam, just the same as yourself."

Grandet returned towards the President, and said to him, "Have you sold your crop?"

"No, indeed; I am holding on. If the wine is good now, it will be far better two years hence. All the growers, as you know very well, have sworn to keep to the prices which have been fixed; and this year the Belgians will not get the better of us. If they were to leave us, why they will be sure to return again."

"Yes, but let us keep firm!" said Grandet, in a tone which made the President tremble.

"Is it likely he can be in treaty for the sale of his?" thought Cruchot.

At this moment a knock announced the arrival of the members of the De Grassins family, interrupting thereby a conversation between Madame Grandet and the abbé.

Madame de Grassins was one of those small, active, plump, red-and-white women, who, thanks to the seclusion of a provincial existence and to the habits of a virtuous life, manage to keep themselves still young at forty years of age. They are like the last roses of autumn, whose

appearance inspires a feeling of pleasure, but whose petals have an indescribable sensation of chilliness, while their perfume is only faintly perceptible. She dressed tolerably well, had all the Paris novelties forwarded to her, set the fashion in the town of Saumur, and gave soirées. Her husband, formerly a quartermaster in the Imperial Guard, who had been seriously wounded at Austerlitz, and had retired from the service, retained, in spite of his deference for Grandet, that apparent frankness of manners for which military men are celebrated.

"Good day, Grandet," he said to the vine-grower, taking hold of his hand, and assuming that air of superiority with which he always overwhelmed the Cruchots.

"Mademoiselle," he said to Eugénie, after he had bowed to Madame Grandet, "beautiful and wise you always are, and I am at a loss to know what your friends can wish you."

He then presented a little box which his servant had carried, and which held a Cape heath—a flower then recently introduced into Europe, and exceedingly rare.

Madame de Grassins kissed Eugénie very affectionately, and, as she pressed her hand, said, "Adolphe has undertaken to present my little keepsake to you."

A tall, pale, delicate-looking young man, of tolerably well-bred manners, timid in appearance, but who had just spent at Paris, where he had gone to pursue his legal studies, eight or ten thousand francs beyond his allowance, advanced towards Eugénie, and presented her with a workbox with silver-gilt fittings; a very ordinary piece, notwithstanding that the initial plate on which an "E. G." in Gothic letters had been carefully engraved may have been intended to lead others to believe that it

was of very excellent workmanship and material. As she opened it, Eugénie was almost overpowered by one of those unexpected feelings of delight which make young girls blush, start, and tremble with happiness. She looked towards her father as if to inquire if she might be allowed to accept it ; and Monsieur Grandet said, " Take it, my girl," with an accent which would have been worthy of an actor on the stage.

The three Cruchots seemed stupefied as they remarked the delighted and animated glance which the young heiress directed at Adolphe de Grassins ; for to her such riches seemed almost incredible. Monsieur de Grassins offered Grandet his snuff-box, took a pinch himself, brushed off the particles which had fallen upon the ribbon of the Legion of Honour fastened to the button-hole of his blue dress-coat, and then looked at the Cruchots with an air as much as to say, " Try and parry that thrust."

Madame de Grassins glanced at the blue glass vase in which the bouquets brought by the Cruchots had been placed, as if looking for their presents with the pretended good faith of a woman disposed to turn everything into ridicule. In this delicate conjuncture, the Abbé Cruchot left the others, who were seated in a semicircle round the fire, and, going up to Monsieur Grandet, walked to the end of the *salle* with him. When the two old men had reached the recess of the window, which was at the greatest distance from the Des Grassins, " Those people yonder," whispered the priest in the miser's ear, " throw their money out of the window."

" What harm in that, if it comes in again at the door ? " replied the vine-grower.

"If you chose to give your daughter a pair of gold scissors, you have means enough to do it," said the abbé.

"I am giving her something better than a pair of scissors," Grandet rejoined.

"My nephew is a blockhead," thought the Abbé, looking at the President, whose rough and disorderly hair added a disagreeable expression to his dark features. "Why could not he have hit upon some stupid little absurdity which would at least look as if it were worth something."

"We are ready for your game of cards, Madame Grandet," said Madame de Grassins; "but, as we are all together, we can make up two tables."

"Since it is Eugénie's birthday, you must all play at loto together," said Père Grandet; "these two young people will join." The old cooper, who never played at any game, pointed to his daughter and Adolphe. "Come, Nanon, set out the tables."

"We will help you, *Mademoiselle Nanon*," said Madame de Grassins gaily, quite delighted at the pleasure she had given Eugénie.

"I never was so pleased in all my life," said the heiress to her. "I have never seen anything so pretty anywhere."

"It was Adolphe who brought it from Paris, and who chose it," whispered Madame de Grassins to her.

"Go on, go on, cursed intriguer!" said the President to himself. "If ever you or your husband should have a lawsuit before me, it shall never be a successful one, I'll take care."

The notary, seated in his corner, looked at the abbé

with a quiet, contented air as he said to himself, "The De Grassins may do what they like; my own fortune, my brother's, and my nephew's amount altogether to eleven hundred thousand francs. If De Grassins has half that sum, it is the very utmost he has. Besides, he has a daughter. They may make what presents they like. Heiress and presents too will all be ours some day hence."

By half-past eight in the evening two tables were set out. The pretty Madame de Grassins had contrived to place her son close to Eugénie. The actors in this scene—which was by no means deficient in interest, notwithstanding its apparent homeliness and vulgarity—having been supplied with cards of different colours, and with counters of blue glass, seemed to listen to the old notary's jokes, who never drew a number without making a remark about it; but Grandet's millions absorbed the thoughts of every one present. The old cooper, with great self-complacency, looked at Madame de Grassin's rose-coloured feathers and her pretty becoming dress, at the banker's martial-looking head, at Adolphe, the president, the abbé, and the notary, and said to himself, "They are all here for my money! They come and bore themselves to death here for my daughter. Well, not one of them shall have her! They are harpoons for my fishing."

The social cheerfulness and gaiety of all present in this old, gloomy-looking room, so dimly lighted by the two candles, the mirth and laughter to which Nanon's spinning-wheel acted as an accompaniment, and which was genuine only as far as Eugénie or her mother were concerned,—this pettiness, joined to interests of such great

magnitude,—this young girl, who, like one of those birds which are hunted with so much ardour, victims of the high value set on them, of which they are innocently ignorant, found herself beset and besieged by proofs of friendship,—everything contributed to render the scene one of a serio-comic nature. It was besides, an incident of every-day occurrence and of universal application, but reduced to its simplest expression. The face of Grandet turning the false attachment of the two families to the best advantage, and, drawing enormous profits from it, seemed to direct and control this drama, and throw a light upon it. Was it not the only modern deity in whom men put any faith—money, with its uncontrolled power, enthroned upon one single human face? The gentler feelings of life there occupied but a secondary place, while they animated three pure hearts—those of Nanon, of Eugénie, and of her mother. What ignorance too, there was in their simple natures! Eugénie and her mother had not the slightest idea of Grandet's fortune. They valued the things of this life only by the light of their own feeble notions, and neither esteemed nor despised money; for they were well accustomed to dispense with it. Terrible condition of a man's existence! There is not a single source of his enjoyment which does not proceed from ignorance of some kind or another.

At the very moment when Madame Grandet had gained a stake of sixteen sous, the highest which had been punted in that room, and when the Grande Nanon was laughing delightfully to see her mistress gain such a large amount, a knock was heard at the door of the

house, which reverberated with such tremendous effect that it made every one start from their seats.

"There is no one in Saumur who knocks in that manner," said the notary.

"Why do people knock like that?" said Nanon. "Do they want to break our door in?"

"Who the devil is it?" exclaimed Grandet.

Nanon took one of the two candles, and went to open the door, accompanied by her master.

"Grandet! Grandet!" cried his wife, who, impelled by a vague feeling of dread, darted towards the door of the *salle*.

All present looked at each other in silence.

"Suppose we go too," said Monsieur de Grassins. "That knock at the door sounded very suspiciously."

M. de Grassins had barely time to perceive the face of a young man, who entered, followed by a porter belonging to the coach-office, carrying two enormous port-manteaus, and dragging the carpet-bags, with which he was also laden, after him. Grandet turned round sharply to his wife, and said to her, "Madame Grandet, return to your *loto*. Leave me to speak to Monsieur——"

He then very sharply closed the door of the *salle*, where the agitated players resumed their places, but unable to continue the game.

"Is it any one from Saumur, Monsieur de Grassins?" said his wife to him.

"No; it is a traveller."

"He can come from nowhere but Paris, then," said the notary, looking at his old-fashioned watch, a couple of fingers thick, which bore a resemblance to a Dutch-

built boat. "It is nine o'clock. Peste! the diligence of the principal office is never late."

"Is the gentleman young?" inquired the Abbé Cruchot.

"Yes," replied Monsieur de Grassins; "and he has brought luggage with him which must at least weigh three hundred kilos."

"Why does not Nanon return?" said Eugénie.

"It must be one of your relations," observed the president.

"Let us make up the pool," said Madame Grandet, gently. "I observed that Monsieur Grandet was vexed when he spoke just now; and he would not be pleased, perhaps, if he found we were talking of his affairs."

"Mademoiselle," said Adolphe to his young neighbour, "it must be your cousin Grandet—a very handsome young man whom I saw at a ball at Monsieur le Maréchal Oud——"

Adolphe paused abruptly, for his mother trod on his foot; and then asking aloud for two sous for her stake, she whispered in his ear, "Hold your tongue, you stupid fellow."

At this moment Grandet returned, unaccompanied by Nanon, whose footsteps, as well as those of the porter, were heard moving about on the staircase. He was followed by the traveller, who, during the last few minutes, had excited so much curiosity, and had so engrossed their attention, that his arrival at the house, and his sudden descent among the persons assembled there, could be compared to nothing else than that of a snail in a beehive, or to the introduction of a peacock into an obscure village poultry-yard.

"Sit down near the fire," said Grandet to him.

Before sitting down, the young stranger bowed very gracefully to the persons present. The men rose, and acknowledged his politeness by a formal bow, while the ladies curtsied ceremoniously.

"You must be cold, monsieur?" said Madame Grandet; "you have perhaps come from——"

"That is just like the women," said the old vine-grower, leaving off reading a letter which he held in his hand. "Why not let him rest?"

"But, papa, the gentleman may possibly want some refreshment," said Eugénie.

"He has a tongue in his head," replied her father, roughly.

The stranger was the only person surprised at this scene. The others were accustomed to Grandet's despotic manners. However, as soon as the two previous questions and the two answers had been exchanged, the stranger rose, turned his back to the fire, raised one of his feet to warm the sole of his boot, and said to Eugénie, "I thank you, cousin; I dined at Tours. And," added he, looking at Monsieur Grandet, "I am not in want of anything; I am not even fatigued."

"You have just come from the capital, I presume?" inquired Madame de Grassins.

Monsieur Charles—for such was the name of the son of Monsieur Grandet of Paris—hearing himself addressed in this manner, took hold of a little eye-glass which was suspended by a chain round his neck, put it up to his right eye for the purpose of examining what was on the table, and the persons who were seated at it, looked at

Madame de Grassins with considerable assurance, and said to her, after he had observed everything, "Yes, madame."

"You are playing at loto, aunt," he added; "I beg you will go on with your game: it is too amusing to leave off."

"I was sure it was the cousin," thought Madame de Grassins, casting a side-glance at him.

"Forty-seven," cried the old abbé. "Come, Madame de Grassins, mark, if you please; is not that your number?"

Monsieur de Grassins placed a counter on his wife's card, who, filled with divers dire forebodings, looked first at the cousin from Paris, and then at Eugénie, without bestowing a thought upon the loto. Every now and then the young heiress stole a sidelong glance at her cousin, and the banker's wife had no difficulty in detecting a *crescendo* of astonishment or curiosity.

Monsieur Charles Grandet, a handsome young man of two-and-twenty years of age, could not but offer a singular contrast to the worthy provincials, who were already, in no slight degree, offended by the young man's aristocratic manners, which they were all engaged in narrowly scrutinizing for the purpose of turning into ridicule. This requires explanation.

At the age of twenty-two, young people are still so closely verging upon childhood as to be guilty occasionally of committing silly or childish actions; and, therefore, out of every hundred, perhaps ninety-nine at least might be met with who would have conducted themselves as Charles Grandet did—sillily and effeminately. A few days

previously to this evening, his father had informed him of his intention to send him for several months to his brother at Saumur. Probably, Monsieur Grandet of Paris thought of Eugénie. Charles, who was going to live in the country for the first time in his life, pictured to himself the opportunities he should have of making his appearance there, armed with all the importance of a fashionable young man, and of throwing the whole arrondissement into despair by the display he should make ; so that his arrival might form an era in the place, and enable him, in addition, to import there the latest inventions of Parisian life. In fact, to express our meaning in as few words as possible, he intended at Saumur to spend more of his time than he could afford at Paris in trimming and arranging his nails, and to indulge there in that extreme refinement of costume which a fashionable young man occasionally abandons for a careless negligent attire, which is itself by no means unbecoming. Charles packed up, therefore, his most becoming shooting costume, the handsomest of his guns, and the prettiest hunting-knife and sheath to be found in Paris. He packed up also his collection of waistcoats of the most marvellous patterns and materials, grey, white, black, shots of every hue, straw-colour, *chinés*, double and single-breasted waistcoats, with collars of all shapes, lying-down, standing-up, buttoned to the throat, &c. He took every variety of shirt collar and cravat then in fashion. He took a couple of dress coats from Staub, and the finest linen he possessed. He took his beautiful dressing-case with its gold fittings—a present from his mother. He took also his numerous collection of trinkets.

not forgetting a charming writing-case which had been given to him by the most amiable of women, in his estimation at least,—by a lady of title, whom he called *Annette*, then travelling with her husband wearily in Scotland, the victim of certain suspicions, which necessarily interfered, for a time at least, with her happiness. He added a quantity of delicately tinted paper, for the purpose of writing her a letter every fortnight ; and, finally, a cargo of Parisian nicknacks as complete as it was possible to make it, among which, from the riding-whip, which serves as the beginning of a duel, down to the pair of beautifully-inlaid pistols which terminate it, were included such articles and implements as a young idler of fashion makes use of to occupy his time and to trifle away his existence. His father having told him not to take his *valet de chambre* with him, he had come in the *coupé* of the diligence, the whole of which had been retained for his own especial use ; for he had been unwilling to spoil a most charming travelling carriage which he had ordered for the purpose of going to meet his dear *Annette*, that great lady whom——, &c. It had been arranged that they should meet in the ensuing month of June at Baden.

Charles fully reckoned upon meeting at least a hundred people at his uncle's residence, upon being able to hunt in his uncle's forests, and in fact to lead there the life which is usually led in country houses. He had most certainly no idea of finding his uncle at Saumur, where he had merely instituted inquiries for the purpose of ascertaining the direction to Froidfond ; and, learning that he was staying in the town, expected to find him installed

in a spacious mansion. For the purpose, therefore, of making his first appearance in his uncle's house in a befitting manner, whether at Saumur or Froidfond, he had put on a travelling costume of a style the most simple and *recherché* that could be devised, perfectly *adorable* indeed to make use of a word which at that time had special application to what was regarded as perfection in any thing or any man. At Tours, a hairdresser had again curled his beautiful brown hair; and while there he had changed his linen and put on a black satin necktie with a round collar, which set off his pale, satirical face to the best advantage. A frock-coat, buttoned half-way up, fitted closely to his figure, and displayed a Cashmere-shawl waistcoat, underneath which he wore another waistcoat, but white. His watch, carelessly thrust in his pocket, was fastened by a small gold chain to one of his button-holes. His grey trousers were buttoned at the sides, and the seams were embroidered with black silk. In an easy graceful manner he dangled in his hand a cane, the carved gold handle of which was not calculated to soil the purity of his primrose-coloured gloves. And, lastly, his hat was in the most perfect taste. A Parisian, a Parisian of the highest order, was alone capable of conducting himself in such a manner as not only to avoid appearing ridiculous, but to reconcile one almost to that air of silly trifling and self-complacency, which were backed in other respects by a gallant bearing—the bearing of a young man who is the possessor of a handsome pair of pistols, is a dead shot, and the intimate friend of Annette.

And now if you wish fully to comprehend the mutual

surprise which was exhibited as well by these Saumur residents as by the young Parisian, to appreciate entirely the brilliant effect which the traveller's elegant costume produced in the midst of the grey shadows of the *salle*, and upon the figures which composed this family picture, try and represent to yourself the Cruchots.

All three of them took snuff, and they had long since ceased to pay any attention to the necessity which existed for using their handkerchiefs, or to the scattered particles of snuff which covered the frills of their discoloured shirts and soiled and rumpled collars. Their unstarched cravats looked like ropes, immediately they tied them round their necks. Their abundant stock of linen, which enabled them to dispense with a general household wash except once in every six months, and which they kept at the bottom of their wardrobes, allowed time to imprint its rusty and mildewed marks upon it. An utter absence of all grace, and an appearance of senility, distinguished them all. Their faces, as faded as their threadbare coats, as full of plaits as their trousers, seemed worn-out, shrivelled up, and set in a fixed grimace. The general negligence of the costumes of the other persons present—without neatness or freshness, like the usual run of provincial toilettes, where people insensibly fall into the habit of never dressing for each other, and of hesitating a long time over the price of a pair of gloves—was in perfect keeping with the indifference to appearances which the Cruchots presented. A perfect horror of fashion in any shape was the only point on which the Grassinists and the Cruchotins were perfectly agreed.

If the Parisian took up his eye-glass to examine the

singular accessories of the apartment, the joists of the ceiling, the colour of the wainscoting, or the marks which the flies had left behind them, the number of which marks, by-the-bye, was so great that they would have sufficed for punctuating the "Enclopédie Méthodique" and "le Moniteur,"—the loto players in their turn immediately looked up, and observed him with the same amount of astonishment as they would have manifested in the examination of a giraffe. Monsieur de Grassins and his son, who were not unacquainted with the appearance of a man of fashion, shared, however, in their neighbour's astonishment, either from the circumstance of their experiencing that indefinable influence of a general feeling, or it may be that they testified their approval of it, by directing at their fellow-townsmen a glance full of irony, as much as to say: "See what kind of people they are at Paris." Every one, moreover, could observe Charles at their leisure, without any risk of displeasing the master of the house, for Grandet was absorbed in the perusal of the long letter he held in his hand, and had taken the only candle on the table to read it by, without bestowing a thought on his guests or on their game.

Eugénie, to whom the type of such a piece of perfection, whether as to costume or to personal appearance, was entirely unknown, fancied she saw in her cousin a being who had descended from some bright seraphic region. She rapturously inhaled the perfume from his glossy and beautifully-curled hair; she would fain have touched the soft kid of his fine gloves; she envied Charles his small hands, his complexion, the delicate regularity of his features; in a word, if, indeed, the comparison can fairly

convey an idea of the various impressions which this handsome youth produced upon an uninitiated, uninformed girl, ever occupied with the darning of stockings, or with the mending and keeping in order her father's linen, whose life had passed away within this squalid habitation, without seeing, in the silent street, more than one passer-by in an hour—the sight of her cousin awakened in her heart the same emotions of luxurious enjoyment which are excited in young men by those ideal feminine figures designed by Westall in the English “Keepsakes,” and so skilfully engraved by the Findens, that one almost fears, lest in breathing on the paper those celestial visions should vanish from the sight.

Charles drew from his pocket a handkerchief which had been embroidered by the great lady who was travelling in Scotland. When Eugénie saw this beautiful piece of work, which love had wrought in those hours of absence that had been denied to love, she looked at her cousin to see whether he really intended to make use of it. Charles's manners, his every gesture, the air with which he took up his eye-glass, his affected superciliousness, his contempt for the work-box which had so recently afforded the rich heiress such infinite pleasure, and which he evidently regarded either as ridiculous, or as of little or no value; everything, in fact, which vexed and offended the Cruchots and the Des Grassins, pleased and delighted her so much, that before she fell asleep that night she had thought long and deeply of this phoenix of a cousin.

The numbers were drawn very slowly, but the game of loto was very soon brought to a termination. Nanon

entered and said: "Please, madame, give me some sheets for this gentleman's bed."

Madame Grandet rose, and followed Nanon; where upon Madame de Grassins said in a low tone: "Let us take our sous and leave the loto."

Every one took back their sous from the old chipped saucer where they had been placed; the company then moved away from the table, and wheeled round towards the fire.

"Have you finished your game?" said Grandet, without leaving his letter.

"Yes, yes," replied Madame de Grassins, advancing to take her seat near Charles.

Eugénie, prompted by one of those thoughts which spring up in a young girl's heart, whenever a feeling or sentiment finds its home there for the first time, left the apartment for the purpose of assisting her mother and Nanon. If she had been interrogated by a shrewd, intelligent confessor, she would, perhaps, have admitted that she thought neither of her mother nor of Nanon, but was instigated by an intense desire to inspect her cousin's room, to do what she possibly could for him, to see that everything was there that might be wanted, to prevent the possibility of anything being forgotten, to look after everything in order to make it as elegant and neat as possible. Eugénie imagined that she alone was capable of understanding her cousin's tastes and ideas. In fact, she arrived just in time to convince her mother and Nanon, who were returning under the impression that everything had been done, that everything on the contrary had yet to be done. It was she who

suggested to Nanon the idea of warming her cousin's bed. It was she who put a toilette-cover on the old table, and begged Nanon to change it every morning. It was she who convinced her mother of the necessity of having a good fire lighted in the fireplace, and persuaded Nanon to bring up, without saying a word to her father about it, a huge pile of wood, and place it in the corridor. It was she who ran to fetch from its place on one of the *encoignures* of the *salle*, an old china basket which had belonged to the late Monsieur de la Bertellière, carrying off also a crystal goblet, a small spoon with the gilt completely worn off, an antique scent-bottle, with figures of Cupids cut upon it, and placed them all, with a triumphant air, upon the mantel-piece. More ideas had sprung up in her mind in a quarter of an hour than she had ever had before since the day of her birth.

"Mamma," she said, "my cousin will never be able to endure the smell of a tallow-candle. Suppose we were to buy some wax-lights?"

Swift as a bird she flew away to take from her purse the five-franc piece which she had lately received for her monthly expenses.

"Here, Nanon," she said, "go as quickly as you can."

"But what will your papa say?"

This terrible objection was started by Madame Grandet when she saw her daughter laden with an old Sèvres china sugar-basin, which Grandet had brought back from the Château de Froidfond.

"And where will you get your sugar from? Are you out of your senses, my child?"

"Mamma, Nanon will buy the sugar as well as the wax candles."

"But your father?"

"Would there be any harm in his nephew drinking a glass of *eau sucrée*? Besides, he will not take any notice of it."

"Nothing escapes your father's attention," said Madame Grandet, shaking her head.

Nanon hesitated, for she knew her master.

"Pray go, Nanon; since it is my birthday."

Nanon burst into a loud laugh at hearing this first attempt at a joke which her young mistress had ever made, and immediately obeyed her. While Eugénie and her mother were doing their utmost to make the bedroom which Monsieur Grandet had assigned to his nephew look as neat and pretty as possible, Charles found himself the object of Madame de Grassins' attentions who was doing her utmost to attract his notice.

"You are very adventurous, monsieur," she said to him, "to quit the amusements of the capital during the winter season to come and reside in Saumur; but if we do not terrify you too much, you will find that people can still amuse themselves among us here."

And she darted a glance at him in a manner peculiar to ladies resident in the provinces, where they are accustomed to veil their eyes with an amount of cautious reserve which communicates to them that peculiar wantonness of look particularly observable among ecclesiastics, who regard every pleasure or gratification in the light of a theft or a fault. Charles felt himself so out of his element in this apartment, so widely different from the

huge château and sumptuous mode of living which he had attributed to his uncle, that, on looking attentively at Madame de Grassins, he perceived a somewhat faded resemblance to a Parisian face and manners. He graciously acknowledged the kind of invitation which was addressed to him, and a conversation naturally ensued, in which Madame de Grassins gradually lowered her voice to render it more in harmony with the nature of her confidential communications. The same need for an interchange of confidence existed in herself as in Charles; and, accordingly, after several minutes passed in coquettish converse and semi-serious gossip, the shrewd provincial was enabled to say to him, without supposing herself overheard by the other persons in the room, who were conversing about the sale of wines, a subject which at that moment occupied the attention of every one in Saumur: "Monsieur, if you will do us the honour to come and see us, you will assuredly confer as much pleasure upon my husband as upon myself. Ours is the only house in Saumur where the leading members among the merchants and the nobility have an opportunity of meeting together; we belong to both sets, and they object to meet anywhere except at our house, where they have an opportunity of amusing themselves. My husband, I am proud to say, is equally respected by both. We will do our best to relieve the dulness of your sojourn here. If you were to remain under Monsieur Grandet's roof, Heaven only knows what would become of you. Your uncle is a close, penurious man, who thinks of nothing but his vines; your aunt is a saint who cannot connect two ideas together; and your cousin Eugénie is an un-

educated, commonplace, portionless little simpleton, who passes her whole existence in mending the house linen."

"This woman is certainly not so disagreeable as I thought," said Charles Grandet to himself, as he responded to Madame de Grassins' amiable advances.

"I begin to think, my dear," said the tall and portly banker, "that you wish to monopolize this gentleman all to yourself."

At this remark, the notary and the president struck in with one or two sly insinuations; but the abbé looked at them with a knowing air and summed up their thoughts as he took a pinch of snuff; then offering his snuff-box to those who were present, he said, "Who could possibly do the honours of Saumur to this young gentleman better than Madame de Grassins?"

"Ha, ha! what do you mean by that, Monsieur l'Abbe?" inquired Monsieur de Grassins.

"I mean it, monsieur, in the most favourable sense for yourself, for madame, for the town of Saumur, and for this gentleman," added the cunning old priest, turning towards Charles.

Without having appeared to pay the slightest attention to them, the Abbé Cruchot had managed to conjecture the subject of Charles's and Madame de Grassins' conversation together.

"Monsieur," said Adolphe to Charles, with an air which he intended to be easy and graceful, "I do not know if you have retained any recollection of me. I had the pleasure of being your *vis-à-vis* at a ball given by the Maréchal Oudinot.

"Perfectly, monsieur, perfectly," replied Charles,

surprised to find himself the object of every one's attention.

"Is this gentleman your son?" he inquired of Madame de Grassins.

The abbé looked at the mother with an air brimful of mischief.

"Yes, monsieur," she replied.

"You must have been very young when you were at Paris?" continued Charles, addressing Adolphe.

"Of course, monsieur," said the abbé; "we send them to Babylon as soon as they are weaned."

Madame de Grassins seemed to interrogate the abbé with a look of the deepest meaning.

"You must come to the provinces," he continued, "if you wish to see ladies of two or three and thirty years of age as fresh and young looking as madame is, after having had sons who have nearly completed their legal studies. It seems as if it were only a few days ago when our young men, and ladies too, stood upon the chairs to see you dance at the ball, madame," added the abbé, turning towards his female adversary. "To me, indeed, your triumphs seem but of yesterday."

"The wicked old wretch!" said Madame de Grassins to herself, "can he possibly have guessed my intentions?"

"It appears that I may calculate upon a good deal of success at Saumur," said Charles to himself, as he unbuttoned his frock-coat, placed his hand in his waistcoat, and assumed that abstracted, meditative expression, in imitation of the *pose* which has been given by Chantrey to Lord Byron.

Père Grandet's inattention, or rather the preoccupation of mind which the perusal of his letter seemed to occasion him, did not escape either the notary or the president, who tried to conjecture what the contents could possibly be, by the almost imperceptible evidences of disturbed feeling in the miser's face, upon which a strong light was thrown by the candle he held. It was with great difficulty that the old man could maintain the usual unruffled expression of his physiognomy. Besides, any one will readily be enabled to conceive the expression which his face assumed on reading this fatal letter :—

“ MY BROTHER,—

“ It is now nearly twenty-three years ago since we last saw each other. My marriage was the object of our last interview, after which we separated delighted with each other. Most certainly I could hardly then have foreseen that you would one day be the sole support of the family whose prosperity you at that time eulogized so highly. By the time this letter will reach you I shall have ceased to live. Considering the position I have occupied, I have found it impossible to survive the disgrace of a bankruptcy. I maintained myself on the brink of the abyss until the last moment, and clung to the hope that I might still survive, but my destruction was inevitable. The bankruptcies of my broker and notary deprived me of my last resources, and left me positively nothing. I am unfortunate enough to owe nearly three millions of francs, and my assets do not amount to more than eight per cent. of my debts. My wines in bond are at this moment subjected to a ruinous fall in price, occasioned

by the abundance and excellence of your vintages. Three days after the date of this letter, Paris will be saying, 'Monsieur Grandet was a dishonourable man.' I shall lay me down, I, an honest man, in a shroud of infamy and disgrace. I despoil my boy, not alone of the name that I have disgraced, but of his mother's fortune also. Of all this, my unhappy child, the idol of my heart, is as yet ignorant. We bade each other tenderly farewell, and, happily, he knew not that almost the last throb of my heart was expended in that farewell. Will not the day come when he will curse his father? My brother, my dear brother, there is something terrible in our children's malediction; they may appeal from ours, but theirs is irrevocable. Grandet, you are my elder brother, I can claim your protection; strive your utmost that no bitter word shall fall from Charles's lips upon his father's tomb! My brother, if I wrote to you with my heart's blood and with my tears, my anguish and torture could not then be keener than that with which this letter is written; for I should weep, my blood would flow, my death would be nigh, and my sufferings at an end; but now I suffer and gaze on death with a tearless eye. You, therefore, will be the father of my boy. He has no relations on his mother's side; the reason you well know. Why did I not yield to those prejudices which the society in which we live imposes on us? Why did I rather blindly follow the dictates of my heart, and wed the natural daughter of a man of birth and family? Charles is now alone in the world. Oh, my child! my unhappy child! Listen, Grandet, I do not approach you to petition for myself; your property, too, may not perhaps be sufficiently large to bear a

mortgage of three millions; but for my boy, my brother, I clasp my hands imploringly together when I think of you. Grandet, as a dying man I commit Charles to your care; and, with a heart unburdened of its woe, I can now gaze upon my pistols, happy in the thought that you will be a father to him.

“He loved me well, Charles. I was all kindness for him; I never contradicted him; I know he will not curse me. Besides, you will see him; he is gentle in his manners—he takes after his mother in that; he will never cause you a moment’s uneasiness. Poor child! accustomed to every enjoyment that luxury can bestow, he has known none of those privations to which the misery of our early life condemned us both. And behold him, ruined and alone! Yes! all his friends will flee him now, and I, I shall have been the cause of his humiliation. Would that my arm were powerful enough to send him by a thrust to join his mother in Heaven! But this is madness; and I must return to my own wretchedness, to that of Charles. I have sent him to you in order that you may break to him, tenderly, the intelligence of my death and of the future position of my affairs. Be a father to him, but a kind father. Do not tear him too suddenly away from his indolent, inactive life, for you will kill him if you do. I implore him on my knees to renounce all claim upon my estate, which, as his mother’s heir, he could properly make against it. But this, I feel, is a needless prayer; he is honour itself, and will feel most keenly that it would ill become him to join himself to the number of my creditors. See that he renounces all right or claim against my estate at the period most befitting the necessities of the case.

Explain to him the hard conditions of the life I have imposed on him ; and if he still retains his old affection for me, assure him, in my name, that all is not lost for him. Yes, that same industry which has saved *us* both, may yet restore him the fortune of which he has been deprived by me ; and if he will listen to his father's voice who, for his sake, would, momentarily, quit the silent tomb whither he is hurrying, let him leave France, and set off for India. My brother Charles is a young man of honour, uprightness, and courage ; you will start him in life, I know ; he would sooner die than fail to return you the money you will lend him—for you will lend it, I know, Grandet ! if not, you will be laying up remorse for yourself in after-years. And if my child were not to find either assistance or affection in you, I would implore Heaven's vengeance on you eternally, for your hardness of heart. If I could but have saved something for him ! I feel that I should have been justified in giving him a certain amount out of his mother's fortune, but the payments which I had to make at the end of the month, as usual, had absorbed all my resources. I should die happier were I assured what would become of my child ; and glad should I be to feel the sacred promises which the warm pressure of your hand would have conveyed ; but I have no time. While Charles is travelling I am obliged to prepare my balance-sheet. I am trying to show by the good faith which will be visible in my affairs, that my misfortunes have come upon me through no fault or dishonesty of my own. And is not this occupying myself about Charles ? Adieu, my brother, may every blessing which Heaven can bestow be yours for the generous

guardianship which I commit to you, and which I do not question for a moment you will accept. A voice will be raised in unceasing prayer for you in that world whither we shall all one day wing our flight, and where I already am.

“VICTOR-ANGE-GUILLAUME GRANDET.”

“You are talking, I see,” said Père Grandet, carefully closing the letter in the same manner in which it had been originally folded, and placing it in his waistcoat-pocket.

He scanned his nephew’s face with a humble and furtive look, behind which he concealed his feelings and his calculations.

“Are you quite warm again?”

“Quite so, my dear uncle.”

“But where are our womankind?” said his uncle, already forgetting that his nephew was going to sleep under his roof.

At this moment Eugénie and Madame Grandet entered the apartment.

“Is everything prepared upstairs?” said Grandet, recovering his self-possession.

“Yes, father.”

“Very well, then, if you are tired, nephew, Nanon will show you the way to your room. It is not a dandy’s apartment, certainly, but you will excuse poor vine-growers like us, who never have a sou to call our own; the taxes swallow up everything.”

“We don’t want to be in the way, Grandet; you will have to talk over family matters with your nephew, and

so we will say, good-night. Good-bye until to-morrow," said the banker.

At these words the others rose, and took leave of the family. The old notary went to look for his lantern, which he had placed beside the entrance-door, and brought it into the room to light it, at the same time offering to accompany the Des Grassins to their door; for, as they had not anticipated the incident which had brought the evening to a premature close, their servant had not arrived.

"Will you do me the honour to accept my arm, Madame?" said the Abbé Cruchot to Madame de Grassins.

"Thank you, Monsieur l'Abbé; my son is here," she replied stiffly.

"Ladies run no risk of being compromised with me," said the abbé.

"Why not give your arm to Monsieur Cruchot?" said her husband to her.

The abbé walked on rather briskly with his pretty companion, so as to keep a few steps in advance of the others.

"That young man is good-looking, madame," he observed, pressing her arm against his side. "You must say good-bye to Mademoiselle Grandet; this Parisian will take Eugénie's heart by storm for, unless he happens to have fallen in love with some fair lady at Paris, your son Adolphe will find him a rival of the most——"

"Nonsense, Monsieur l'Abbé; it will not take long for this young man to find out that Eugénie is a silly child,

and a very plain-looking girl, too. Have you noticed her? She was as yellow as a quince this evening."

"You have already drawn the cousin's attention to that, perhaps?"

"Why, I certainly did not hesitate to do so."

"If you were to place yourself always close beside Eugénie, madame, you would have no occasion to say much to her cousin. This Paris youth will, of his own accord, institute a comparison, which——"

"In the first place, he has promised to come and dine with me the day after to-morrow."

"Ah! if you only would, madame——" said the abbé.

"What do you wish me to do, Monsieur l'Abbé? Do you mean to suggest anything wrong by saying that? I have not arrived at the age of thirty-nine, with a reputation perfectly intact, thank Heaven, to risk compromising it, even for the sake of the empire of the Great Mogul. We are both of an age to know the meaning of people's remarks. For an ecclesiastic you have some very singular ideas. For shame! Such an idea is worthy of Faublas."

"You have read Faublas, I presume?"

"No, Monsieur l'Abbé; I meant '*Les Liaisons Dangereuses*.'"

"Ah! that book is infinitely more moral than the other," said the abbé, laughing. "But you make me as wayward as our young friend of to-day is; I wished simply to——"

"Will you pretend to say that you did not mean to insinuate something wrong? Is not that quite clear? If that young man, who is very good-looking and agree-

able, I admit, were to be very attentive to me, he naturally would not think about his cousin. At Paris, I am aware, some most excellent and worthy mothers do not hesitate to devote themselves in that way for the advancement of their children ; but we are in the country here, Monsieur l'Abbe."

" Yes, madame."

" And," she resumed, " neither I nor Adolphe himself would care to have even a hundred millions purchased at such a cost."

" Madame, I have not said a word about a hundred millions ; that, indeed, might possibly have been beyond your strength and my own too. I only think that any high-principled woman can, with the most perfectly honourable intentions, allow herself to indulge in any little innocent coquetries, which, indeed, society almost imposes on her as a duty."

" Do you think so ? "

" Is it not our duty, madame, to make ourselves as agreeable as possible to one another ? Will you allow me to use my handkerchief ? "

" I assure you, madame," he resumed, " that he kept looking at you in a far more agreeable manner than when he looked at me ; but I forgive him for doing honour to beauty in preference to old age."

" It is very clear," said the president, in his usual loud voice, " that M. Grandet of Paris has sent his son to Saumur with some extremely matrimonial intentions."

" But if that were really the case, would this cousin have burst on us like a bomb-shell, as he has done ? "

replied the notary

"Oh ! that goes for nothing," said Monsieur de Grassins ; " the *bonhomme* is very mysterious."

"De Grassins, my dear, I have invited this young man to dinner ; so you must go and invite Monsieur and Madame de Larsonnière and the Du Hautoy, with the beautiful Mademoiselle du Hautoy, of course, provided she makes herself presentable on that day. Her mother, out of jealousy, dresses her so frightfully."

"I hope, monsieurs, that you will do us the honour to come, too," she added, halting suddenly in order to turn round and address the two Cruchots.

"Here you are at home, madame," said the notary.

And having saluted the three Des Gressins, the three Cruchots returned home, and applied that genius for analysis which most provincials possess towards the consideration, under all its aspects, of the great event of the evening, which altered the respective positions of the Cruchotins and the Grassinists. That excellent common-sense, which governed all the actions of these close reasoners, made each of them feel the necessity of a temporary alliance against the common enemy. Ought they not mutually to prevent Eugénie from loving her cousin Charles, and Charles from thinking of his cousin Eugénie ? Would the Parisian be able to resist the perfidious insinuations, the insidious calumnies, the detractions full of faint praise, the naively expressed disparagements which would be kept constantly fluttering about him, and would render his escape impossible, in the same way as the bees cover over with wax the unfortunate snail which happens to find its way into their hive ?

When the four relations were left alone in the *salle*,

Monsieur Grandet said to his nephew, "It is time to go to bed; it is too late to talk over the matters which were the cause of your coming here; we shall find a favourable opportunity to-morrow. We breakfast at eight o'clock; our mid-day meal consists of a little fruit, a morsel of bread which we eat standing, and one glass of white wine; and we dine, as you Parisians do, at five o'clock. That is the order of the day. If you should like to see the town or the environs, you will be as free as the air. You will excuse me if my affairs should prevent me accompanying you always. It is not unlikely you will hear people say that I am a rich man—Monsieur Grandet here, Monsieur Grandet there. I take no notice of what they say, for their gabble don't hurt my credit; but I have not a sou, and, at my age, I work like an artisan who has nothing else to boast of but indifferent tools and a strong pair of arms. You will very soon learn for yourself, perhaps, the value of a crown-piece when you have to work for it. Now, Nanon, where are the candles?"

"I hope, nephew, that you will find everything you want," said Madame Grandet; "but if you should need anything, you can call Nanon."

"There will be no occasion for that, my dear aunt; I think I have brought all I need with me. Allow me to wish you good-night, as also my young cousin."

Charles took a lighted wax candle from Nanon's hand, of a very yellow colour, which had grown old in the shop where she had bought it, and was so like a common tallow candle that Monsieur Grandet, who was incapable of

suspecting the existence of such a thing in his house, did not notice this grand display.

“ I will show you the way,” he said.

Instead of leaving the room by the door which led into the courtyard, Grandet was ceremonious enough to pass into the passage which separated the *salle* from the kitchen. Folding-doors, with large oval panes of glass let in, separated this passage from the staircase, so as to exclude the cold air which blew in hard gusts into it. But, notwithstanding this precaution, the wind, in the winter, found its way in all the same, and in spite of the sand-bags which were placed round the doors leading into the *salle*, the temperature there could hardly be kept up sufficiently. Nanon bolted and fastened the street-door, shut up the *salle*, and let loose in the stable a wolf-dog, whose voice was as hoarse as if he were troubled with an affection of the larynx. This animal knew no one but her, and was savagely ferocious ; these two rough, wild creatures understood each other perfectly. When Charles observed the stained and blackened walls of the well of the staircase which, with its rickety stairs, shook under his uncle’s heavy foot, his disenchantment increased more and more ; he fancied himself in a fowl-house. His aunt and cousin, towards whom he turned as if to watch the expression of their faces, were so thoroughly accustomed to the staircase, that, not imagining for a moment the cause of his astonishment, they fancied it was intended as an expression of friendly regard, and responded to it by a pleasant smile, which threw him into despair.

"What the deuce has my father sent me nere for?" he said to himself.

When he reached the first landing, he observed three doors painted in Etruscan red, but without architraves; doors let into the dusty walls, with large iron hinges conspicuously displayed, tapering to a point at either end, in a flame-like form, of the same pattern as the plates round the keyholes. The door immediately at the top of the staircase, which led into the room situated over the kitchen, was evidently walled up. Access to it, in fact, could only be obtained from Grandet's own bedroom, to which this room served as a dressing-room or study; and the only window by which it was lighted was protected on the side looking out on the courtyard by enormous iron bars. No one, not even Madame Grandet, was ever allowed to enter there. Her husband preferred being there alone, like an alchemist over his furnace. Most probably it was there that some secret hiding-place had been skilfully contrived; there, where his title-deeds were deposited, there, where the scales were kept with which he was in the habit of weighing his louis; there, where he secretly passed the nights in drawing out his acknowledgements and receipts, and in working out his calculations; a circumstance which made those with whom Grandet had business to transact, and who found him always ready and prepared for whatever might happen, almost fancy that he had either a fairy or an evil spirit at his orders. There, most probably, too, at a time when Nanon was snoring loud enough to shake the walls of the house, when the wolf-dog was watching and yawning in the courtyard, and

when Madame and Mademoiselle Grandet were fast asleep, the old miser made his way, to nestle his gold in his embrace, to caress, to gloat over, to handle, and to hug it to his breast. The walls were thick, the shutters discreet. He alone kept the key of this laboratory, where, it was reported, he used to con over the plans upon which his fruit-trees were all carefully marked down, and where he was able to calculate the products of his estates almost to every single layer of vines and to every faggot he possessed. The entrance to Eugénie's room was immediately opposite this walled-up door; and at the end of the landing was an apartment used by the husband and wife in common, which extended the whole front of the house. Madame Grandet's bedroom communicated with that of Eugénie by a glass door; her husband's sleeping-apartment was separated from her own by a partition, and from the mysterious dressing-room by a thick wall. Père Grandet had lodged his nephew on the second floor, in a top garret situated immediately over his own bedroom, so that he could hear him whenever he might take it into his head to leave or to return to his room.

When Eugénie and her mother reached the middle of the landing, they kissed each other as they said "good night;" and then having also bid Charles "good night," in a few words, which sounded cold and indifferent as the lips pronounced them, but were full of a warmth and feeling that sprang from the young girl's heart, they retired to their apartments.

"Here you are in your own room, nephew," said Père Grandet to Charles as he opened the door. "If

you should want to go out, you must call Nanon ; for if she were not with you, the dog would tear you to pieces without giving you a moment's warning. I hope you will sleep well. Good night."

"Ha ! ha !" he resumed, " those ladies have lighted you a fire, I see."

At this moment Nanon made her appearance with a warming-pan in her hand.

"Why, here is another of them !" said Monsieur Grandet. "Do you take my nephew for a woman just confined ? Take yourself off with that pan of coals, Nanon."

"But the sheets are quite damp, monsieur ; and this young gentleman really seems as delicate as a woman."

"Very well, then, just as you like, since you have made up your mind to do it," said Grandet, giving her a push on the shoulder ; "but take care not to set fire to anything."

The miser then went downstairs, grumbling and muttering indistinctly. As for Charles, he stood completely dumbfounded in the midst of his luggage. Having cast his eyes upon the walls of the garret into which he had been shown, covered as they were with that yellow-coloured paper intermixed with bouquets of flowers so generally used for papering the rooms of taverns of the most ordinary stamp ; upon a chimney-piece of unpainted, common stone, the very aspect of which produced a chilling effect ; upon several varnished cane chairs, also of a yellow colour, their wooden framework being yellow too ; upon an open night-table, which was large enough to hold a serjeant in the Voltigeurs ;

upon a small strip of the commonest sort of carpeting, placed at the side of a four-post bedstead with chintz hangings, the valance of which trembled and shook as if it were about to fall to pieces, completely eaten by the moths; he looked ruefully at Nanon, and said to her, "Can you tell me, my girl, if I am really in the house of Monsieur Grandet, the late mayor of Saumur, and brother of Monsieur Grandet of Paris?"

"Yes, monsieur, in the house of a very kind, and good, and excellent gentleman. Shall I help you to unpack your luggage?"

"I shall be very much obliged to you if you will, my old trooper. Have you ever served in the Horse Marines?"

"Oh! oh! oh! oh!" said Nanon, laughing; "what are the Horse Marines like? What a droll fellow you are! Oh! oh!"

"Here, look for my dressing-gown, which you'll find in that trunk. Here is the key."

Nanon was perfectly amazed at the sight of a green silk dressing-gown, of an antique design, covered with gold flowers.

"Are you going to put that on to go to bed in?" she said.

"Yes."

"Holy Virgin! What a beautiful altar-cloth it would make for our parish church. Pray, my dainty young gentleman, give it to the church; you will save your soul, while wearing it will only make you lose it. Oh! how nice you look in it! I'll run and fetch mademoiselle to come and look at you."

"Come, Nanon, since Nanon is your name, I will thank you to hold your tongue. Let me go to bed ; I will arrange all my things to-morrow, and as you like my dressing-gown so much, you may save your own soul if you like. I am too much of a Christian to refuse it you when I leave, and you can then do whatever you like with it."

Nanon stood as if she were rooted to the ground, looking hard at Charles, unable to believe that he meant what he said.

"Give me that beautiful gown !" she said, as she went out of the room. "He is dreaming already. Good night."

"Good night, Nanon."

"What have I been sent here for ? " said Charles, as he settled himself to sleep. "My father is by no means deficient in sense, and must have had some motive for my journey. To-morrow is quite time enough, however, for serious affairs, as some Greek blockhead or another used to say."

"Holy Virgin, how good looking my cousin is !" said Eugénie to herself, breaking off in her prayers, which, that evening at least, she forgot to finish.

No particular thought crossed Madame Grandet's mind as she retired to rest. Through the door of communication in the partition, she heard the miser walking up and down his own bedroom. Like all timid women, she had thoroughly studied her lord and master's character, and in the same way that the seaman feels the approaching storm, she had, by certain imperceptible signs, acquired an instinctive presentiment of the in-

ternal tempest which disturbed Grandet's equanimity. And, therefore, to employ the expression which she herself made use of, she lay as still as death. Grandet fixed his eyes upon the door of his study, lined on the inside with sheet iron, which he had had put up, and said to himself, "What an extraordinary notion of my brother's to leave me his child! A nice legacy, truly! I have not twenty crowns to dispose of. But what are twenty crowns to that young coxcomb, who looked at my barometer as if he would have liked to burn it for firewood?"

In thinking over the consequences of the distressing legacy which had been bequeathed him, Grandet was, perhaps, more agitated than his brother had been at the moment of tracing the bequest.

"I'm to have that gold dress," said Nanon, who in her sleep fancied herself dressed in her altar-cloth, and dreamed of flowers, silks, and damasks, for the first time in her life, as Eugénie dreamed of love.

In the pure and monotonous life which young girls lead, a blissful hour at last arrives when the sun expands its warm rays in the soul, when the restless throbbings of the heart communicate the fervour of their teeming fancies to the brain, and fuse its ideas in one vague desire; the period of innocent melancholy and sweet sensations of delight. When infants begin to observe objects, they smile; when a young girl begins to discover feeling and sentiment in nature around her, she smiles as she was wont to smile when a child. If light be the first object of attachment and regard in life, is not love the light of the heart? The moment had now

arrived for Eugénie to see clearly and distinctly into all things here below.

Like all girls living in the country she rose early, and offered up her morning prayer. She then commenced her toilette, an occupation which had now acquired an importance in her eyes, and which, henceforward, had a sense and signification which she had never attributed to it before. Her first act was to smooth her chestnut hair, and twist its thick tresses round her head after having platted them smoothly and regularly with the greatest attention, introducing into the arrangement of her hair a grace and symmetry which enchanced the timid and ingenuous expression of her face, adding a simplicity of style to the artless innocence of her features. Then, washing her hands several times in the cold water which hardened and reddened her skin, she looked at her beautifully rounded arms, and wondered what her cousin did to make his hands so white and delicate, and his nails so well shaped. She put on her newest stockings, and the best-shaped shoes she had. She laced her stays with the greatest care, without missing a single eyelet-hole. And lastly, desirous for the first time in her life of appearing to the best advantage, she experienced the delight of wearing a new dress, well made, which she knew became her greatly.

No sooner had she finished dressing than she heard the clock of the parish church strike, and was surprised to find it no later than seven. Her wish to get as much time as possible to dress herself to the greatest advantage had, consequently, made her rise too soon. Ignorant of the art of arranging a tress of hair in a dozen different

ways, and of studying its different effects, Eugénie patiently crossed her arms, sat down at the window, looked out upon the courtyard and the narrow garden, and upon the high terraces which commanded it—a dismal and contracted view, yet one which was not deficient in a certain indefinable attractiveness peculiar to isolated situations, or to nature in its wild, uncultivated state. Close beside the kitchen was a well, having its edge protected by a curbstone, and supplied with a pulley, supported in its place by a hook, which was attached to a vine, whose withered branches were discoloured and blighted by the weather. Thence, the twisted tendrils had made their way to the wall, to which they clung tenaciously, and, stretching along the whole length of the house, reached a wood-shed, in which the billets were arranged with as much precision as the books of a bibliopole in his library. The pavement of the courtyard was stained with discoloured marks, arising as much from age as from the moss, weeds, and absence of all movement upon it. The thick walls presented to the view a green coating streaked with long brown marks ; and, lastly, the eight steps at the bottom of the garden, which led to the garden door, had fallen to pieces, and were buried beneath a profusion of shrubs, like the tomb of a knight errant buried by his widow in the time of the crusades. Above a heap of broken stones was a wooden gate, which had partially fallen down from decay, and was covered with climbing plants, which twined their tendrils about it in wild confusion. Through the opening at either side of the gate, a couple of stunted apple-trees projected their

crooked branches. Three gravelled walks, running parallel to each other, but separated by beds of earth bordered with box, completed the garden, which was terminated at the bottom of the terrace by a shady covert of lime-trees. At one corner a few raspberry-bushes were growing; at the other, an enormous walnut-tree, whose branches extended as far as the window of the old cooper's study.

It was a bright autumnal morning, and the beautiful autumnal sun, with an effect peculiar to the banks of the Loire, was beginning to disperse the mists which the previous night had left clinging to the various picturesque objects around, to the walls and to the shrubs with which the garden and the courtyard were stocked. Eugénie discovered fresh charms in everything around her, everything which hitherto had worn so commonplace an aspect. A thousand confused and restless thoughts were springing up within her mind, expanding there in the same way as the rays of the rising sun diffused their genial influence without. In a word, she experienced that sensation of vague, inexplicable pleasure, which envelopes the moral being as a cloud envelopes the physical. Her reflections were in unison with the details of the singular landscape before her, and the harmonious throbbings of her heart were in gentle concord with the harmonies of nature. As soon as the sun had reached a certain part of the wall, from which the plant called "Venus' hair," with its thick leaves and ever-changing colours, like the breast of a pigeon, hung in masses, celestial rays of hope seemed to shed a bright light upon the future for Eugénie, who,

from that moment, loved to regard that part of the wall, its pale blue flowers and its faded plants, with which henceforth a remembrance full of loveliness and grace, like those of tender infancy, was unfadingly associated. The sound which every falling leaf, as it separated itself from its branch, produced in that echoing courtyard, seemed to offer a response to the secret questionings of the heart of the young girl, who felt as if she could have remained rooted in her place for the rest of the day, unconscious of the flight of time. But then succeeded the tumultuous agitation of her whole being. She rose frequently from her seat, sat down before her looking glass, and fixed her eyes upon her features reflected there, just as a candid and truthful author examines his work, in order to criticise his own performance and to make his own injurious comments upon it to himself.

“I am not pretty enough for him.” Such was Eugénie’s thought, a thought steeped in humility and fertile in bitter suffering. The poor girl failed to do herself justice. But modesty, or timidity rather, is one of the first virtues which spring from love. Eugénie belonged to that type of children endowed with hardy constitutions, which is usually met with among the less substantial of the middle classes, and whose personal appearance indicates a certain rusticity of style ; but if she bore a resemblance to the Venus of Milo, her form and figure were ennobled by that gentleness of Christian feeling which refines and purifies woman, and confers on her a distinctiveness of character unknown to the ancient sculptors. Her head was large and massive ; she had that masculine but delicate forehead which

Phidias has bestowed upon his Jupiter, and eyes of a greyish colour, which the perfect purity of her life, to be read there in unmistakable characters, had filled with a clear and steady light. The features of her rounded face, formerly fresh and bright-looking, had been somewhat marred by an attack of small-pox, so mild, however, as to have left but faint traces behind of its effects ; but although it had destroyed that velvet-like smoothness of the skin, it had, nevertheless, still left it so soft and delicate in its texture, that her mother's pure kiss left a faint red mark, transient in its impression, upon it. Her nose was a little too prominent, but it harmonized well with her mouth ; while her bright-red lips were expressive of love and sweetness of disposition. The roundness of her neck was perfect in its beauty. The fulness of her bust, modestly veiled, attracted attention and inspired delicious musings ; it was deficient, perhaps, in a certain acquired grace, but for persons of an appreciative taste, the want of flexibility in her lofty stature would be regarded as an additional charm.

Eugénie, tall and strongly made, possessed nothing of that prettiness with which the generality of mankind is pleased, but she was beautiful in that style of beauty which is so easily misunderstood, and with which artists alone are captivated. The painter who searches throughout the human world for a type of the heavenly purity of the Virgin Mary, and seeks in every member of the softer sex for those meek yet lofty eyes which Raphael had divined, those pure outlines which nature sometimes bestows, but which a Christian and chaste life can alone

preserve or succeed in acquiring ; such a painter, enamoured of so rare a model, would at once have found in Eugénie's face that innate nobleness of nature unconscious of itself ; he would have traced beneath her calm, unruffled brow a whole world of love, and in the shape of her eyes, as well as in her manner of closing her eyelids, something almost divine in their expression. Her features, and the contour of her head, which the expression of pleasure had never changed or fatigued, seemed like the softly-traced outline of the horizon as reflected in the far distance of a peaceful lake. Her calm, fresh-coloured face, tinged with light like a beautiful budding flower, had a chastening influence upon the mind, revealed the peacefulness of a conscience which appeared reflected in it, and seemed to invite the gazer's oft-repeated attention. Eugénie was still upon the verge of womanhood, at that age when the illusions of childhood flourish undisturbed, or when the flowers are plucked with a happiness unknown in later years ; and so, she repeated to herself, as she gazed upon her mirror, and as yet unconscious of what love really was, " I am too plain, he will not notice me."

She then opened the door of her bedroom which led out upon the staircase, and listened to the different sounds stirring in the house. " He is not getting up," she thought, when she heard Nanon's morning fit of coughing, as the good-hearted wench moved actively about, sweeping out the *salle*, lighting her fire, chaining up the dog, and talking to her animals in the stables.

Eugénie went down stairs immediately, and ran to Nanon, who was milking the cow.

"Nanon, will you make some cream for my cousin's coffee, there's a dear Nanon?"

Nanon burst out into a loud laugh, as she answered,—

"We ought to have set about that yesterday, *mademoiselle*. I can't *make* cream. What a little darling your cousin is—a darling, a regular darling! You didn't see him in his fine dressing-gown, all silk and gold. I saw him, though. His linen is as fine as our *cure's* surplice."

"Nanon, make some tea-cake, then."

"And who will give me the wood for the oven, and the flour and butter, I should like to know," said Nanon, who, in her capacity of Grandet's prime minister, had a wonderful importance ascribed to her in Eugénie's and her mother's eyes. "Must we rob the master in order to treat your cousin? Go and ask him for some butter, flour, and wood; he's your own father, and can give you what you want. Ah! here he is coming down stairs to look after the provisions——"

Eugénie made her escape into the garden, terrified out of her life when she heard the staircase creak under her father's footsteps. She was already experiencing the effects of that sensitive modesty and of that peculiar consciousness of personal happiness, which make us imagine, and not unreasonably so, perhaps, that our thoughts are engraven on our face, and are obvious to every one else. And, then, at last realizing the state of hard privation which existed in her father's house, the poor girl could not prevent a feeling of deep annoyance at her inability to place it in harmony with her cousin's elegance. She experienced the greatest desire to do

something for him ; but what she could not tell. Simple and truthful, she followed the impulses of her angelic disposition, without a suspicion crossing her mind as to the nature of her own impressions or feelings. The mere appearance of her cousin had awakened within her the natural feelings of her sex, which would be only the more likely to be displayed with greater force, inasmuch as, having attained her twenty-third year, she was now in the fulness of her intelligence and of the ardent impulses of her nature. For the first time in her life her heart throbbed in terror at the sight of her father ; she saw in him the master of her destiny, and fancied herself guilty of a fault even, in secreting some of her thoughts from him. She began to walk about with hurried steps, surprised at breathing a purer air, at feeling the genial influence of the sun's rays more vivifying than ever, and at absorbing as it were a moral warmth, a new life. While engaged in devising some contrivance to procure the tea-cake for her cousin, there arose between Nanon and Grandet one of those quarrels, as rare between them as swallows in winter. With his keys in his hand, the old man had come to measure out the necessary provisions for the day's consumption.

"Is there any bread left from yesterday ?" he asked Nanon.

"Not a crumb, monsieur."

Grandet took a large round loaf, well sprinkled with flour, moulded in one of those flat pans which in Anjou are generally used for baking bread in, and was on the point of cutting it, when Nanon said to him, "But there are five of us to-day, monsieur."

"Very true," replied Grandet; "but your loaves weigh six pounds, and there will be sure to be some left. Besides, you'll find that these young Paris fellows don't eat bread."

"They eat *frippe*, then?" said Nanon.

In Anjou, *la frippe*, a word of popular invention, expresses the accompaniment of bread, from butter spread upon a slice of bread, which is common *frippe*, to a preserve made from peaches, which is the most celebrated of *frippe*s. But every one who in the days of his childhood has licked off the *frippe*, and left the bread, will comprehend the meaning of this expression.

"No," replied Grandet; "they eat neither *frippe* nor bread. They are rather like girls in love."

After having given out, with great niggardliness, the supply of food for the day, Grandet was about to proceed towards his fruit-room, not, however, until he had carefully shut his cupboards and his larder, when Nanon stopped him with these words: "Well, monsieur, if you will give me out some flour and some butter, I will make a cake for the young people."

"Are you going to pillage my house because my nephew is here?"

"I was thinking just as much of your nephew as I was of your dog—not more than you think of him yourself. Don't you see, you have only given me out six pieces of sugar, and I want eight?"

"Come, Nanon, I have never seen you like this before. What idea have you got into your head now? Are you mistress here? You shall have no more than six pieces of sugar."

"Very well, then ; but what will your nephew sugar his coffee with ? "

"With two pieces ; I will go without."

"You go without, at your time of life ! I would sooner buy you some out of my own pocket."

"Mind your own business."

Notwithstanding its low price, sugar was, in the cooper's estimation, the most precious of all the colonial produce. In his eyes it was never worth less than six francs the pound. The necessity for using it sparingly, which existed under the Empire, had become one of his most rooted habits. But every woman, even though she be the silliest and most weak-minded of her sex, well knows how to intrigue so as to attain the object she has in view. Nanon gave up the question about the sugar in order to secure the tea-cake.

"Mademoiselle," she cried through the window, "would you not like me to make a tea-cake for you ? "

"No, no," replied Eugénie.

"Well, Nanon," said Grandet, when he heard his daughter's voice, "come here."

And, opening the flour-bin, he measured her out a certain quantity, and added a few ounces of butter to the piece he had already cut off.

"And now I want some wood to heat the oven," said the pitiless Nanon.

"Very well, you may take what you want," he replied, in a melancholy tone ; "but in that case you must make us a tart, and must cook the rest of the dinner in the oven ; so that you need not light two fires."

"I should think not, indeed," cried Nanon, "there's no occasion to tell me that."

Grandet gave his faithful minister a look which had something almost fatherly in its expression.

"Mademoiselle," cried the cook, "we are going to have a cake."

Père Grandet returned laden with fruit, and arranged some of it in a dish on the kitchen table.

"Look here," said Nanon to him, "what pretty boots your nephew wears. What beautiful leather, and how nice it smells. What do they use to clean it with? Must I take some of your blacking with the egg in it?"

"I think, Nanon, that the egg spoils that sort of leather. Besides, you can tell him that you don't know how to polish morocco, for that is morocco leather. He will buy some for himself at Saumur, and will give it to you to polish his boots with. I have heard that they put sugar in their blacking to make it look brilliant."

"These ought to be good to eat, then," said the servant, holding the boots close to her nose. "Why, it smells exactly like madame's eau-de-cologne. How funny that is!"

"Funny!" said her master, "you think it funny to put more money on the boots than the man is worth who wears them."

"Monsieur," she said, after her master's second journey to the fruit-room, which he had carefully locked up, "don't you intend to have the *pot au feu* once or twice a week, on account of your——"

"Yes."

" Shall I go to the butcher's ? "

" Certainly not, you must make us some soup out of the poultry the tenants send us ; they won't let us want for it. Now I think of it, I will go and tell Cornoiller to shoot a few crows. That kind of game makes the best soup to be got anywhere."

" Is it true, monsieur, that they eat dead bodies ? "

" How stupid you are, Nanon ! They eat, like every one else, whatever they can manage to get hold of. Don't we ourselves live on the dead ? What are inheritances, then, if we don't ? "

Père Grandet, having no further orders to give, looked at his watch, and, seeing that he had still half an hour to dispose of before breakfast, took up his hat, went and kissed his daughter, and said to her, " Will you take a walk with me on the banks of the Loire, in my meadows ? I have something to do there."

Eugénie went and put on her straw hat lined with pink silk, and the father and daughter walked down to the place together.

" Where are you going to so early ? " said Cruchot, the notary, who happened to meet Grandet.

" To see something," the latter replied, in no way duped by his friend's early walk.

Whenever Grandet was going *to see something*, the notary knew, by experience, that there was always *something* to be gained from him, and so he accompanied him.

" Come, Cruchot," said Grandet to the notary, " as you're a friend of mine, I will show you what a stupid thing it is to plant poplars in good land."

Maître Cruchot opened his eyes in a state of bewilderment.

"I suppose you reckon as nothing, then, the sixty thousand francs you received from those which stood on the banks of the Loire? What luck you have had! To cut down your trees at the very moment there was a scarcity of deal at Nantes, and to sell them at thirty francs!"

Eugénie was listening without knowing that she was approaching the most momentous epoch of her life, and that the notary would be the means of getting a judicial sentence from her father passed upon her, from which there was no appeal.

"Cruchot," said Grandet, when they had arrived at the magnificent meadows which he possessed on the banks of the Loire, and on which thirty labourers were engaged in clearing away, filling up and levelling, the holes which the poplars had formerly occupied. "Maître Cruchot, look what a space a poplar-tree takes up? Jean," he cried out to a labourer, "measure that hole for me."

"Four times eight feet," replied the man, when he had finished measuring.

"Thirty-two feet of ground lost," said Grandet to Cruchot. "On that line I had three hundred poplar-trees, hadn't I? Well, three hu-hu-hundred times thirty-two fe-feet took up the room of fi-five hundred feet of hay; add twice as much again for the sides, makes fifteen hundred; the rows in the middle as much again, which will co-co-come to, let us say, three thousand trusses of hay."

"Well," said Cruchot, coming to his friend's assist-

ance, "three thousand trusses of hay of a quality like that would be worth about eighteen hundred francs."

"We will say two th-thousand francs, because of the three or four hundred francs from a second crop. Very good; cal-cal-calculate what two th-th-thousand francs a year for forty years amount to, with the in-in-interest to be charged at the rate you know."

"Say a hundred thousand francs," returned the notary.

"Very good, very good; th-that will only ma-make a hundred thousand francs. Now see," resumed the old vine-grower, without a stammer, "two thousand five hundred poplars, of forty years' growth, would not give me seventy-five thousand francs; so that there is a loss. *I* have found that out!" said Grandet drawing himself up.

"Jean, you will fill up all the holes except those along the bank of the Loire, where you will plant the poplars I have bought. By putting them by the river, they will be nourished at the expense of the Government," he added, turning towards Cruchot and giving the wen at the end of his nose a slight movement, which was as significant as the most ironical smile could have been.

Cruchot, in a state of amazement, was almost ready to worship Grandet.

"That is quite clear," he said; "poplars ought never to be planted, except on poor land."

"Yes, monsieur," replied the cooper.

Eugénie was gazing on the beautiful scenery of the Loire, without heeding her father's calculations; but she pricked up her ears at a distance when she heard

Maître Cruchot say to his client, "And so you have sent to Paris for a son-in-law? No one at Saumur can talk of anything else but your nephew. I suppose I shall soon have a marriage settlement to draw; eh, Père Grandet!"

"You have got up early in order to te-te-tell me that," resumed Grandet, accompanying this reflection by a movement of his wen. "Well, my old com-com-companion, I will be frank with you, and I will te-tell you what you wa-want to know: I would far sooner, d'ye hear, throw my daughter into the Loire than give her to her co-cousin; and so you can go and tell that where you li-like. But no, it's not worth the trouble; let people talk."

At this reply everything seemed to swim before Eugénie's eyes. The indistinct hopes in which, in the secret recesses of her heart, she had begun to indulge, seemed suddenly to burst into flower, to bloom, to converge towards each other and form a group of flowers, which she now beheld severed and lying on the ground. Ever since the previous evening she had become attached to Charles by all those happy bonds which unite two hearts together, and from this moment suffering and anxiety were destined to strengthen them. Is it not part of the noble destiny of women to be more affected by the stern reality of misery than by all the splendour of fortune? Why was it that all fatherly feeling and regard seemed to have been entirely rooted out of her father's heart? What crime had Charles been guilty of? Questions full of mystery. Already was that love, which was dawning in her heart, itself so profound a

mystery, enveloped in mystery. She returned homewards, every limb trembling as she walked ; and when she reached the old gloomy street, which had always appeared to her so pleasant and cheerful, it now seemed mournful in its aspect as she absorbed the melancholy influences which time and circumstances had stamped upon it. Not one of the indications of love failed her. When she had arrived within a few paces of the house, she preceded her father, and waited for him at the door after she had knocked. But Grandet, who observed in the notary's hand a newspaper, with the band still round it, said, " How are the funds ? "

" You won't listen to me, Grandet," answered Cruchot. " Buy in as quickly as you can, even now twenty per cent. can be made in a couple of years, besides an excellent rate of interest ; an income of five thousand francs for an outlay of eighty thousand francs. They are at 80 francs 50 centimes."

" We will see about it," replied Grandet, rubbing his chin.

" Good Heaven ! " cried the notary.

" Well, what is it ? " exclaimed Grandet. At the very moment Cruchot thrust the journal before him, saying, " Read that article.

" ' Monsieur Grandet, one of the most esteemed merchants at Paris, blew out his brains yesterday, after having made his usual appearance at the Exchange. He had transmitted his resignation to the President of the Chamber of Deputies, and had similarly resigned the posts he held at the Tribunal of Commerce. The failures of Messrs. Roquin and S——, his stockbroker

and notary, have ruined him. The great consideration and credit which M. Grandet enjoyed were such that there is no doubt assistance would have been readily afforded him even on 'Change at Paris. It is a matter of regret that this man, so truly honourable in every respect, should have yielded to a first impulse of despair, &c.' ”

“ I know all about it,” said the old vine-grower to the notary.

This remark made Maître Cruchot shudder ; and, in spite of his notarial impassibility, he felt a cold shiver down his back as he thought that the Grandet of Paris had perhaps implored, and implored in vain, the aid of the millions of the Grandet of Saumur.

“ And his son, so cheerful last night——”

“ He knows nothing about it yet,” replied Grandet, with the same unmoved air.

“ Adieu, Monsieur Grandet,” said Cruchot, who now clearly comprehended everything, and went off to reassure the President de Bonfons.

Grandet found breakfast quite ready on going in. Madame Grandet, upon whose neck Eugénie threw herself, kissing her with an effusion of feeling which revealed a secret sorrow, was already seated on her chair by the window, engaged in knitting herself a pair of sleeves for the winter.

“ You can begin to eat,” said Nanon, who came down stairs as fast as she could ; “ the poor child is sleeping like a cherub. He looks so pretty with his eyes shut. I went into the room and called him, but it was no good.”

"Let him sleep," said Grandet ; " he will wake soon enough to learn the bad news."

"What is the matter ? " inquired Eugénie, putting into her coffee the two small pieces of sugar, weighing it is impossible to say how many grains, which the old miser amused himself in his leisure moments in cutting up. Madame Grandet, who had not ventured to ask the question, looked at her husband.

"His father has blown out his brains."

"My uncle ? " said Eugénie.

"Poor young man ! " exclaimed Madame Grandet.

"Yes, poor indeed ! " returned Grandet ; " he is not worth a sou."

"For all that he sleeps as if he were king of the whole world," said Nanon, in a pitying tone of voice.

Eugénie left off eating. Her heart seemed to stand still, as is sometimes the case when, for the first time, a feeling of compassion, aroused by the misfortune of the one she loves, seems to pervade a woman's whole being. The poor girl burst into tears.

"You didn't know your uncle," said her father, darting at her a look like that of a famished tiger, which he probably bestowed upon his heaps of gold ; " what are you crying for ? "

"Well, monsieur," said the servant, "who wouldn't feel for that poor young man who is sleeping like a top without knowing what has happened ? "

"I didn't speak to you, Nanon ; hold your tongue."

Eugénie learnt at this moment that a woman who loves ought always to conceal her feelings. She did not answer.

"Until I return you will not say a word to him about anything, I hope, Madame Grandet. I am obliged to go and trace out the course of the ditch which is to separate my fields from the road. I shall be back at twelve for luncheon, and I shall then talk over business matters with my nephew. As for you, Mademoiselle Eugénie, if you are crying for that dandy fellow, we've had quite enough of that; he shall be packed off to India, and you shall not see him again."

Grandet took up his gloves, which were lying on the rim of his hat, put them on in his usual quiet manner, and then fitted them on by pressing the fingers of both hands together.

"Oh, mamma, I am choking!" cried Eugénie, when left alone with her mother. "I have never suffered like this."

Madame Grandet, seeing her daughter turn pale, opened the window and let the fresh air blow in upon her face.

"I am better now," she said, after a moment.

This nervous emotion in a nature which had hitherto seemed calm and self-possessed, reacted upon Madame Grandet, who looked at her daughter with that sympathetic intuition with which all mothers are endowed for the object of their affection, and guessed everything. But, in truth, the life led by the two celebrated Hungarian sisters, attached to each other by an error of nature, had never been more intimate than that which united Eugénie and her mother, who were always together in that window recess, together at church, and sleeping together in the same atmosphere.

"My poor child!" said Madame Grandet, taking hold of Eugénie's head and pressing it against her bosom.

At these words the young girl lifted up her head, looked questioningly in her mother's eyes, as if to read her secret thoughts, and said, "Why send him to India? If he be unhappy, ought he not to stay here? Is he not the nearest relation we have?"

"Yes, my child, that would be natural enough: but your father has his own reasons, and we must respect them."

The mother and daughter sat down in silence, the one upon her high chair, the other upon her little stool beside her. Both of them resumed their work; but, oppressed with a feeling of gratitude for the sympathy which her mother had shown for her, Eugénie kissed her hand as she said, "How kind you are, dear mamma." These words made her mother's face, worn by long and anxious suffering, beam with joy. "Do you like him?" Eugénie asked.

Madame Grandet's only answer was a smile; but after a moment's pause she said in a low tone, "Can you be in love with him already? That would be wrong."

"Wrong," returned Eugénie, "why? You are pleased with him, so is Nanon, and why should I not like him? Come, mamma, let us get the table ready for his breakfast."

She threw her work aside, her mother doing the same. "You are very silly, Eugénie."

But she seemed to take a pleasure in justifying her daughter's folly by sharing it. Eugénie called Nanon.

"What do you want now, mademoiselle?"

"Nanon, will you be able to let us have some cream by the middle of the day?"

"Oh, yes, for the middle of the day," replied the old servant.

"Very well, then; give him some very strong coffee. I have heard Monsieur de Grassins say that they make the coffee very strong in Paris; so put a good deal in."

"And where am I to get it from?"

"Buy some."

"But if master should meet me?"

"He is in his fields."

"Then I will run off. But Monsieur Fessard already asked me if we had got the three Magi staying with us, when he gave me the wax candles. Everybody in the town will know what we are doing."

"If your father finds out anything," said Madame Grandet, "he is capable of beating us."

"Very well! if he do so, we will receive his blows, kneeling."

Madame Grandet raised her eyes towards Heaven. Nanon put on her cap and went out. Eugénie gave out clean table-linen, and went to fetch some bunches of grapes, which she had amused herself by hanging to lines in the loft. She walked lightly along the corridor, in order not to awaken her cousin, and could not resist listening at his door to the steady breathing which escaped his lips.

"Misfortune is awake while he sleeps," she said to herself. She selected the freshest of the vine leaves, arranged her grapes as coquettishly as an old butler or housekeeper could have done, and placed them triumph-

antly on the table. She laid violent hands, in the kitchen, on the pears which had been counted out by her father, and arranged them in pyramids among the leaves. She went to and fro, from one room to another, running and jumping about. She felt as if she would have liked to sack her father's house from top to bottom; but he kept everything under lock and key. Nanon returned with two new-laid eggs, and, no sooner did Eugénie see them, than she felt disposed to fling her arms around the old servant's neck.

"The tenant of La Lande had some in his panniers. I asked him for some, and the old fellow gave me these two to keep on good terms with me."

After a couple of hours' busy occupation, during which Eugénie left her work twenty times at least to go and see the coffee boiling, or to go and listen to the noise her cousin made in getting up, she succeeded in preparing a very plain and inexpensive breakfast, but one which terribly infringed on the inveterate habits of the house. The mid-day meal was partaken of standing. Each person took a piece of bread, a little fruit, and a glass of wine. When she saw the table drawn close to the fire, an arm-chair placed ready for her cousin, and when she saw the two plates of fruit, the egg-cup, the bottle of white wine, the bread, and the sugar piled up in a saucer, Eugénie trembled in every limb, as she only then began to think of what her father's looks would be if he had happened to come in at that moment. She could not, therefore, help looking very frequently at the clock in order to calculate whether her cousin could finish his breakfast before her father's return.

"Don't be uneasy, Eugénie: if your father returns, I will take everything upon myself," said Madame Grandet.

The tears started to Eugénie's eyes, as she exclaimed, "Oh, my dear mother, I have never loved you half enough!"

Charles, after having moved about in his room a thousand times, humming all the while, at last came downstairs. Fortunately, it was only eleven o'clock. He had taken as much pains with his dress as if he had been in the château of the great lady who was travelling in Scotland. He entered the room with that agreeable and smiling air which is so becoming to young people, and which caused Eugénie a feeling of sadness not un-mixed with pleasure. He had treated the mistake into which he had fallen with respect to the château in Anjou with great good humour, and accosted his aunt cheerfully.

"Have you passed a good night, my dear aunt? and you, too, cousin?"

"Thank you, monsieur; and you?" said Madame Grandet.

"Perfectly so."

"You must be hungry," said Eugénie; "sit down to your breakfast."

"I never breakfast before the middle of the day, the moment I get up. However, I have fared so indifferently during my journey here, that I place myself entirely in your hands. Besides," he continued, as he looked at the most beautiful little flat watch that Breguet had ever made, "why, it is only eleven o'clock? How early I am?"

"Early!" said Madame Grandet.

"Yes; but I wanted to put my things in order. However, I shall be very glad to eat something—a fowl or a partridge—anything will do, indeed!"

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed Nanon, as she heard these words.

"A partridge!" said Eugénie to herself, who would cheerfully have given her whole stock of money for a partridge at that moment.

"Come and sit down," said his aunt to him.

The dandy sat down in the arm-chair with a gracefully indolent air, in the same way as a pretty woman assumes her seat on a couch. Eugénie and her mother took their chairs, and sat down close beside him before the fire.

"Do you always live here?" said Charles to them, finding the *salle* still more gloomy in the daytime than he had found it the previous evening by candle-light.

"Always," replied Eugénie, looking at him, "except during the vintage. We then go and help Nanon, and we all stay at the Abbaye de Noyers."

"Do you never walk out?"

"Sometimes on Sundays, after vespers, when it is fine," said Madame Grandet, "we take a walk on the bridge, or else we go and see the men mowing the hay."

"Have you a theatre here?"

"Go to the theatre!" cried Madame Grandet, "see the actors! Are you not aware, monsieur, that it is a mortal sin?"

"Here, monsieur," said Nanon, entering the room with the eggs in her hand, "I have brought you some fowls in their shells."

"Oh! new-laid eggs," said Charles, who, like all persons of extravagant habits, had forgotten all about his partridge. "This is delicious! Have you any butter, my good girl?"

"Butter! Won't you have some cake?" said the servant.

"Get some butter, Nanon," cried Eugénie.

The young girl watched her cousin as he cut his bread into long thin pieces to dip into his egg, and was as well pleased as the most susceptible grisette in Paris could have been at the representation of a drama where innocence eventually triumphs. It cannot be denied that Charles, who had been brought up by a mother whose manners were grace itself, and whose own manners had had the last finishing touch applied to them by a woman of acknowledged position in the fashionable world,—it cannot be denied, we say, that all his movements were full of little airs as graceful and refined as those of a woman of the most studied elegance. There is something perfectly magnetic in the sympathy and tenderness manifested by a young girl; and Charles, therefore, finding himself the object of his cousin's and his aunt's attentions, could not escape the influence of those feelings which they so lavishly bestowed upon him. He bent upon Eugénie a look eloquent with kindness and fond affection, a look which seemed to smile. He observed, as he gazed at her, the exquisite harmony of her features, her childlike attitude, the magical brightness of her eyes, which revealed her youthful thoughts of love, indicative of a tenderness of regard exempt from every impulse of passion.

"Upon my word, my dear cousin, if you were in full dress, and in a box on the grand tier at the opera, I can assure you that my aunt would be perfectly right in what she said just now, for you would certainly be the cause of inspiring a great many men with a feeling of envy, and a great many women with that of jealousy."

This compliment thrilled through Eugénie, and made her heart throb with delight, although she was innocent of its meaning.

"Oh! cousin, you are laughing at a poor simple country girl."

"If you knew me, my dear cousin, you would be aware that I detest raillery of any kind; it hardens the heart, and deadens all the feelings;"—and, with a perfectly satisfied air, he put a piece of bread and butter into his mouth. "It may be, that I am not sufficiently clever to turn others into ridicule, and I suffer a good deal from this want of ability. In Paris people find means of irretrievably ruining a man by merely saying, 'He is a good-natured fellow.' This phrase means, 'The poor fellow is as stupid as a rhinoceros.' But, as I am rich, and known to be well able to kill my man at the first shot, at thirty paces' distance, I escape being laughed at."

"You show that you have a good heart, nephew."

"You have a very pretty ring on your finger," said Eugénie; "may I ask to look at it?"

Charles held out his hand, as he took off his ring, and Eugénie blushed as she touched with the tip of her own fingers, her cousin's pink and well-shaped nails.

"Look, mamma, what beautiful workmanship."

"There's a good deal of gold in it," said Nanon, bringing in the coffee.

"What is that?" asked Charles, laughing at the appearance of an oblong pot of brown earthenware, glazed inside, with a border of ashes all round the outside, and as the coffee settled to the bottom of the vessel, particles of it rose every now and then to the surface of the boiling liquid.

"It is boiled coffee," said Nanon.

"Ah! my dear aunt, I shall at all events leave some beneficial trace behind me of my visit here. You are very, very backward in this place. I will teach you how to make coffee in one of Chaptal's *cafetières*."

He attempted to explain the principle of Chaptal's *cafetière*.

"Ah! if there's so many things to be done as that, it would take up a whole lifetime. I shall never make coffee like that. And I should like to know, too, who would look after our cow while I was making the coffee?"

"I will make it," said Eugénie.

"Poor child!" said Madame Grandet, looking at her daughter.

At this remark, which reminded them of the affliction with which the unhappy young man would be shortly overwhelmed, the three women suddenly became silent, and looked at him with an air of pity that could not escape his attention.

"What is the matter, cousin?" he said.

"Chut," said Madame Grandet to Eugénie, who was on the point of speaking. "You know, Eugénie, that your father has undertaken to speak to Monsieur——"

"Charles," said young Grandet.

"Ah! is your name Charles? What a pretty name!" exclaimed Eugénie.

Anticipated evils are almost always sure to happen. Suddenly Nanon, Madame Grandet, and Eugénie, who could not think of the old vine-grower's return without trembling, heard a knock at the door, a sound with which they were only too well acquainted.

"There is papa," said Eugénie.

She removed the saucer containing the sugar from the table, leaving a few lumps upon the cloth. Nanon hurried away with the plate on which the eggs had been brought in; and Madame Grandet drew herself up like a startled deer. It was a complete panic, which Charles was of course unable to account for.

"Why, what is the matter?" he asked them.

"My father is here," said Eugénie.

"Well!"

Monsieur Grandet entered, casting his keen glance on the table, on Charles, and saw everything.

"Ah! ah! you have been treating your nephew to a banquet I see; very good, very good, very good, indeed. When the cat's away, the mice will play."

"A banquet," said Charles to himself, far from suspecting the style of living and the customs of the house.

"Give me my glass, Nanon," said the vine-grower.

Eugénie brought the glass. Grandet took out of his waistcoat pocket a horn-handled knife with a large blade, cut a slice of bread, took a piece of butter, spread it carefully, and began to eat without sitting down. At this moment, Charles put some sugar into his coffee.

Grandet observed the lumps of sugar, looked narrowly at his wife, and taking three steps towards her, bent down and whispered in the poor woman's ear—"Where did you get all that sugar from?"

"Nanon went out to get some from Fessard, there was none left."

It is impossible to give an idea of the profound interest with which this dumb scene was watched by the three poor women: Nanon had left her kitchen, and was looking in at the door of the *salle* to see how things were going on there. Charles, having tasted his coffee, and not finding it sweet enough, looked round for the sugar.

"What do you want, nephew?" said the old vine-grower.

"The sugar."

"Put some milk in," replied the master of the house, "your coffee will be sweeter then."

Eugénie took up the saucer and placed it on the table, looking her father quietly in the face. Unquestionably that Parisian dame, who, to facilitate her lover's flight, sustained with her own weak arms the silken ladder which bore his weight, could not have shown more courage than Eugénie displayed in placing the saucer back again upon the table. The lover will richly recompense his lady-love who proudly shows him her beautiful but bruised and wounded arm, of which its every swollen vein will be bathed with tears and kisses, and healed by the rapture of their meeting; whilst Charles would never know the secret of those violent emotions which wrung the heart of his poor cousin, upon whom the old vine-grower's stern gaze was so threateningly bent.

"You are not eating anything, wife?"

The poor submissive creature advanced to the table, and, with a cowed air, cut off a piece of bread, and took a pear.

Eugénie boldly offered her father some grapes, saying, "Do taste some of my fruit, papa. You will eat some, will you not, cousin Charles? I have been to fetch these grapes expressly for you."

"If these women are not prevented, they will pillage the whole town of Saumur for you, nephew. When you have done, we will go into the garden together; I have a very sad piece of news to tell you."

Eugénie and her mother darted a look at Charles, at which it was impossible to mistake the expression.

"Sad, uncle! since my poor mother's death"—and his voice trembled at these words—"there is no possible misfortune that could happen to me."

"Who can know the afflictions with which it is the will of Heaven to try us, Charles?" said his aunt.

"Ta! ta! ta! ta!" said Grandet, "now, you're beginning with your silly nonsense. Nephew, I'm sorry to see your hands so white and delicate." He displayed the shoulder of mutton hands which nature had placed at the end of his own arms. "These are the sort of hands for scraping crowns together. You have been brought up to put your feet into the kind of leather of which pocket-books are made, and in which bank-notes are put. Bad! bad!"

"What do you mean? I give you my word I do not understand a single syllable you are saying."

"Come," said Grandet, shutting up his knife, drinking the remainder of his wine, and opening the door.

“ Oh ! take courage, cousin ! ”

The tone with which the young girl said this chilled Charles with terror, and, a prey to the most intense anxiety, he followed his terrible relation out of the room. Eugénie, her mother, and Nanon went into the kitchen, excited by an ungovernable anxiety to follow, with their eyes at least, the two actors in the scene which was about to take place in the small, damp garden, where, at first, the uncle walked about with his nephew without saying a word. Grandet did not feel in any way embarrassed at having to inform Charles of his father's death ; but he could not refrain from something like a feeling of compassion when he knew him to be without a sou, and he endeavoured to find some mode of softening the expression of so bitter a truth. To have to say, “ *You have lost your father !* ” was a mere nothing ; but “ *You are without any means of livelihood !* ” was as if all the misfortunes the world contained were included in those words. And the old vine-grower for the third times paced up and down the centre walk of the garden, crunching the gravel under his heavy tread as he moved along. In all the great events and occurrences of our life, the mind becomes strangely impressed by the localities in which we may happen to be at the precise moment when the pleasures or miseries in question overwhelm us with their weight. And thus it was that Charles examined, with minute attention, the box borders of the little garden, the dried and falling leaves, the dilapidated walls, the fantastic forms of the fruit-trees, all the picturesque details whereof remained indelibly engraven on **him** memory, undyingly blended together, in that hour

of supreme agony, by a kind of artificial memory peculiar to the nature or state of mind.

"It's very warm, very warm," said Grandet, drawing in his breath.

"Yes, uncle; but why——"

"Well, my boy," returned the uncle, "I have bad news to tell you. Your father is very bad——"

"Why am I here then?" said Charles. "Nanon," he cried, "post-horses directly. I shall be sure to find a carriage about here, I suppose?" he added, turning towards his uncle, who never moved.

"Horses and carriages are of no use," replied Grandet.

Charles stood speechless, pale as death, with his eyes fixed on his uncle.

"Yes, my poor boy, you guess what is coming, I see; he is dead. But that is nothing; there is something worse still—he has blown his brains out——"

"My father!"

"Yes, but *that's* nothing. The papers gloss over that as if they had the right to do so. Look here——"

Grandet, who had borrowed Cruchot's newspaper, thrust the fatal article under Charles's eyes; and the poor young man, still a child, still at an age when the heart unburdens itself of its feelings without restraint, burst into tears.

"That's all right," said Grandet to himself. "His eyes frightened me. He's all right now he has begun to cry."

"That's not all yet, my poor nephew," replied Grandet, without knowing whether Charles was listening; "that's nothing; you will console yourself in time; but——"

"Never ! never ! my father ! my father !"

"He has ruined you ; you have no money left !"

"What does that matter ! Where, oh where is my father ?"

His tears and sobs, which were unrestrained, were heartrending in the extreme, and were heard distinctly by the three women, who, overcome by their feelings, could not refrain from weeping bitterly, for tears are as contagious as laughter. Charles broke away from his uncle without listening to him any further, hurried through the courtyard, ran up the staircase, burst into his room, and threw himself across the bed, burying his face in the clothes, to weep there, undisturbed by the presence of his relatives.

"We must let the first shower pass over," said Grandet, returning to the *salle*, where Eugénie and her mother had hastily resumed their seats, and were working with trembling hands, after having dried their tears. "But this young man is good for nothing ; he thinks more of those who are dead than of his money."

Eugénie shuddered to hear her father express himself in such a manner about the most sacred of all afflictions, and from that moment she began to form her own opinion of her father's character. Although the sound of Charles's sobs was deadened, still, in that echoing mansion, they could be heard distinctly ; and his plaintive moans, which seemed to proceed out of the very earth itself, continued until the evening, having gradually grown weaker and weaker.

"Poor young man !" said Madame Grandet.

Fatal exclamation ! Grandet looked at his wife, at

Eugénie, and at the sugar-basin; he remembered the extraordinary breakfast which had been prepared for his unhappy relation, and drew himself up in the middle of the room.

"Ah! ah! I hope," he said, with his usual calm air, "that you are not going to continue your wastefulness, Madame Grandet? I don't give you MY money for you to stuff that fellow with sugar."

"My mother has nothing to do with it at all," said Eugénie; "it is I who——"

"Is it because you are of age," returned Grandet, interrupting his daughter, "that you mean to vex me? Reflect, Eugénie——"

"The son of your own brother, father, ought not to want in your house for any——"

"Ta! ta! ta! ta!" said the old cooper, upon the four chromatic tones; "the son of my brother here, my nephew there! Charles is nothing whatever to us; he is not worth a sou; his father has failed. And as soon as my fine young master here has had his fill of crying, he shall pack off from this place; I don't mean him to turn my house upside down."

"What is the meaning, father, of becoming a bankrupt?" asked Eugénie.

"Becoming a bankrupt," returned her father, "why, it means to commit the most dishonourable action that can possibly disgrace a man!"

"It must be a very great sin, then," said Madame Grandet, "and our brother's soul is lost."

"There you go with your psalm-singing nonsense," he said, shrugging up his shoulders.

"Becoming a bankrupt, Eugénie," he resumed, "is a theft which, unfortunately, the law takes under its protection. Certain people have given Guillaume Grandet all the means they had, upon the faith of his reputation for honour and honesty ; well, then, he has taken everything, and has left them only their eyes to weep with. The highway robber is better than a bankrupt ; he attacks you, you can defend yourself, and his head is at stake ; but the other—at all events Charles is a dishonoured man."

These words sunk deeply into the poor girl's heart, and oppressed it with all their weight. High principled, with all the sensitive delicacy of a flower reared in the depths of a forest, she was unacquainted with the maxims of the world, its captious reasonings, or its sophisms. She, therefore, accepted the scandalous explanation which her father designedly gave her as to the nature of bankruptcy, without acquainting her with the distinction which exists between an involuntary and a premeditated bankruptcy.

"And you were not able to prevent this bankruptcy, I suppose, papa ? "

"My brother didn't consult me. Besides, he owes two millions."

"How much is a million, father ? " she inquired, with the innocent simplicity of a child who expects to find its wish promptly complied with.

"Two millions," said Grandet, "are two millions of twenty-sous pieces ; five pieces of twenty sous make five francs."

"Good Heaven," cried Eugénie, "how could my uncle

have had two millions of his own? Is it likely that any one in France can possibly have two millions?"

Grandet slowly rubbed his hand over his chin, and smiled.

"But what will become of my cousin Charles?"

"He will start for India, where, in compliance with his father's wish, he will try and make his fortune."

"But has he any money to take him there?"

"I will pay his journey to—yes, to Nantes."

Eugénie ran towards her father, and threw her arms round his neck.

"Oh, my dear, dear father, how kind, how good you are!"

She embraced him in so affectionate a manner, that Grandet began to feel ashamed of himself, for his conscience smote him not a little.

"Will it take long to save up a million?" she asked.

"You know what a louis is, I suppose?" said the old vine-grower. "Very well, then, you must have fifty thousand of those to make a million."

"Mamma, we will offer up our prayers for him."

"I was thinking the same thing," said the mother.

"Quite right, of course, to go and spend money in that way!" cried the father. "Do you think we're made of money here?"

At this moment a deep groan, more heart-rending than those that had preceded it, echoed in the garrets, and made Eugénie and her mother shudder with terror.

"Nanon," said Grandet, "go upstairs and see if he has put an end to himself. Ah! ah!" he resumed, turning towards his wife and his daughter, who had changed

colour at his remark, "no nonsense, you two. I am going to have a look at those Dutch fellows who are leaving the place to-day; and I shall afterwards go and see Cruchot, and talk all this over with him."

He then left them. As soon as the door was closed behind him, Eugénie and her mother breathed more freely. Until that morning the poor girl had never felt constrained in her father's presence; but during the last few hours her feelings and ideas seemed to change every minute.

"Mamma, how many louis does a cask of wine sell for?"

"Your father sells his between a hundred and fifty and two hundred francs, sometimes three hundred, so I have heard."

"When, therefore, his vintage brings him in fourteen hundred casks of wine——"

"Really, my child, I don't know what that makes; your father never talks to me about his affairs."

"But papa must be rich, then?"

"Perhaps. But Monsieur Cruchot told me that your father had bought Froidfond two years ago, and that may have cramped his means."

Eugénie, puzzled in her endeavours to understand something further respecting her father's fortune, gave up her calculations in despair.

"He did not so much as even see me, poor boy!" said Nanon, as she entered the room. "He is lying like a lamb upon his bed, and is crying like a Magdalen."

"How the poor child must be suffering!"

"Do let us go and console him at once, mamma; we can come down if any one should knock."

Madame Grandet found it impossible to resist yielding to the entreating tones of her daughter's voice. Eugénie was sublime in her woman's feelings.

With throbbing hearts both went up to Charles's room, the door of which was open. The poor fellow neither observed nor heard them approach; but, overwhelmed with the bitterness of his distress, his grief continued to break forth in inarticulate moans.

"How dearly he loved his father!" said Eugénie in a low voice.

From the tone in which this remark was made, it was impossible to misconstrue the hopes with which, unwittingly, her heart, passionate in its excess of devotion, was filled. Madame Grandet could not refrain from casting a look, fraught with a mother's fond affection, upon the daughter, as she whispered in her ear, "Take care, my child,—you might love him."

"Love him?" returned Eugénie. "Ah, if you only knew what my father said!"

Charles turned round, and perceived his aunt and cousin.

"I have lost my father, my poor father! If he had but confided to me the secret of his misfortune, we might both have worked to repair it. My good, kind father! I reckoned so surely on seeing him again, that I almost think I took leave of him coldly."

His tears choked his utterance.

"We will pray for him without ceasing," said Madame Grandet. "Resign yourself to Heaven's will."

"Summon up your courage, cousin," said Eugénie, "your loss is indeed irreparable; but you must now think of saving your own honour."

With that instinctive delicacy of perception of a woman who possesses a ready tact for every circumstance in life, even when administering consolation, Eugénie's object was to draw away her cousin's attention from dwelling on his affliction, by directing his thoughts towards himself and his own position.

"My honour!" cried the young man, hurriedly throwing back his hair from off his face, and sitting up on the bed, with folded arms. "Ah! true, true! My father, my uncle told me, has died insolvent." He uttered a wild cry, and hid his face in his hands. "Oh! Heaven forgive my father; he must, indeed, have suffered bitterly."

There was something horribly attractive in the expression of this childlike grief, so unassumed, unpremeditated, and unaffected. His grief was chaste and sacred; and Eugénie's and her mother's simple hearts understood its nature; for, when Charles, by a gesture, seemed to beg them to leave him to himself, they went down stairs, silently resumed their seats near the window, and worked for about an hour without saying a word to each other. By a furtive look which she had cast round her cousin's room, a kind of look by which young girls see everything at a glance, Eugénie had remarked his different articles of toilette, his scissors and razors inlaid with gold. The glimpse she caught, through the sorrow with which her heart was burdened, of a costliness and luxury of which she was quite ignorant, rendered Charles, from contrast, perhaps, an object of greater interest than ever. Never had an event of such momentous importance—never had a spectacle of such dramatic effect, struck the imagination

of these two poor creatures, whose whole lives had been uninterruptedly passed in the most perfect tranquillity and solitude.

"Mamma," said Eugénie, "shall we go into mourning for my uncle?"

"Your father will decide about that," replied Madame Grandet.

And they again relapsed into their former silence. Eugénie continued her work, and drew her stitches with so regular and mechanical a movement that the thoughts with which her mind was teeming could not have escaped an ordinary observer. This loving girl's first wish was to share her cousin's mourning. About four o'clock in the afternoon, a loud hurried knock made Madame Grandet's heart throb thickly.

"What is the matter with your father?" she observed to her daughter.

The vine-grower entered in a state of great delight. After having taken off his gloves, he began to rub his hands as if he would have rubbed the skin off, had not the epidermis been tanned like Russia leather, without, it must be admitted, its fragrant odour. He walked about the room, looked out at the weather, until at last his secret escaped him.

"Wife," he said, without stuttering, "I have taken them all in. We have sold our wine. The Dutch and Belgians went off this morning; I walked about the market-place, in front of their inn, and put on as stupid an air as I could. *Somebody* whom you know came up to me. The proprietors of all the best vineyards are holding back their wines, and intend to wait. I have not pre-

vented them. Our Belgian was in despair. I saw that. The affair was settled ; he takes all our vintage at three hundred francs the cask, half the money down. He paid me in gold ; the bills are drawn ; here are six louis for you. In three months the price of wine will go down."

These latter words were pronounced in so calm, but in so profoundly an ironical tone, that the Saumur townspeople, who were at the moment collected in the market-place, and aghast at the news of the sale which Grandet had just effected, would have been in utter dismay if they could have heard them. A sudden panic would have caused a decline of fifty per cent. in the price of wines.

" You have a thousand casks this year, have you not, father ? " was Eugénie's reply.

" Yes, my little girl."

This expression indicated the extravagant nature of the old cooper's delight.

" That makes three hundred thousand twenty-sous pieces, then."

" Yes, Mademoiselle Grandet."

" In that case, father, you can very easily help Charles."

The amazement, the wrath and stupefaction of Belshazzar when he saw the Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin, on the wall, could bear no comparison to the concentrated anger of old Grandet, who, without bestowing a thought upon his nephew, found that the latter had obtained a place in the heart and calculations of his daughter.

" Ah ! ah ! ever since that gay young spark has set his foot in *my* house, everything goes wrong. You take it into *your* head to prepare a banquet for him, and to make a great fuss on his account. I won't have anything

of the sort. I should think I ought to know, at my age, how to manage my own affairs. At all events I'm not going to take a lesson from my daughter, or from any one else. What is proper to be done for my nephew I shall do ; there's no occasion for you to thrust your nose in. As for you, Eugénie," he added, turning towards her, " don't say another word about him, for if you do I'll pack you off to the Abbaye de Noyers with Nanon, and that not later than to-morrow, too, if you forget what I now tell you. Where is this fellow ? Has he come down stairs ? "

" No, Grandet," replied his wife.

" Well, then, what is he doing ? "

" He is weeping for the loss of his father," replied Eugénie.

Grandet looked at his daughter without finding another word to say. He, too, was a father in his way. After having taken two or three turns up and down the room, he hastened upstairs to his study, to think over an investment in the public funds. The two thousand acres of forest-land which he had cleared, had produced him eight hundred thousand francs. By joining to this sum the money obtained from the sale of his poplar-trees, and the amount of his income of the last and the present years, in addition to the three hundred thousand francs arising from the sale which he had just effected, he would be able to realize altogether a sum of thirteen hundred thousand francs. The profit of twenty per cent. which was to be turned within a short period by a present investment in the funds, which were at 80 francs 50 centimes, tempted him sorely. He noted down the figures of his speculation

on the very journal in which his brother's death was recorded, and could have heard, had he been disposed to listen, the tears and moans of his nephew. Nanon knocked at the wall, as an intimation to her master that the dinner was ready. He said to himself, as he passed under the arch, and while pausing on the last step of the staircase, "Since I shall make eight per cent. interest by this affair, I shall do it. In two years' time I shall have a couple of millions of francs, which I shall draw from Paris in sterling gold.

"Well, where is my nephew?"

"He says he don't want anything to eat," replied Nanon. "It's not good for him to go without."

"So much saved, then," replied her master.

"You may well say that," she returned

"Bah! bah! he'll leave off crying by-and-by. Hunger drives the wolf out of the wood."

The dinner passed off in strange silence. As soon as the cloth was removed, Madame Grandet observed to her husband,—

"We must put on mourning, Grandet."

"Really, Madame Grandet, you seem hardly to know what to do to find out a means of spending money. True mourning is in the heart, and not in the dress."

"But we cannot dispense with putting on mourning for a brother, and the Church commands us to——"

"Buy your own mourning out of your six louis, then, and give me a crape hatband, that'll be quite enough for me."

Eugénie raised her eyes towards Heaven without saying a word. For the first time in her life the generous feelings

of her nature, which had hitherto slumbered and been kept in check, but were now suddenly awakened, were doomed to be wounded at every moment. That evening, in appearance, differed in no degree from a thousand other evenings of their monotonous existence, but it was assuredly the most horrible that had been passed. Eugénie went on working, without lifting up her head, and made no further use of the workbox which Charles had treated with so much indifference the previous evening. Madame Grandet was knitting. Grandet sat twirling his thumbs for four consecutive hours, wrapped up in a series of calculations, which, in their results, were destined, on the following day, to overwhelm the whole of Saumur with astonishment. No one came during the whole of that day to pay the family a visit. At that moment the whole town was ringing with the account of the trick Grandet had played them, of his brother's bankruptcy, and of his nephew's arrival. Yielding to the necessity of talking about their common interests, all the different proprietors of vineyards belonging to the higher and middle classes of Saumur had met at Monsieur de Grassins' house, where the most violent imprecations were thundered forth against the old vine-grower. Nanon was busily spinning, and the noise of her wheel was the only sound to be heard in the unbroken silence of the room.

"We're not wasting our powers of speech," she said, displaying her teeth, which were as white and large as peeled almonds.

"Mustn't waste anything," replied Grandet, rousing himself from his meditations. He saw, in the perspec-

tive, eight millions of francs in three years, and was borne along the surface of this long sheet of gold

"It is time to go to bed. I shall bid good night to my nephew for everybody, and shall see if he wants anything."

Madame Grandet remained on the landing of the first floor to overhear the conversation which might take place between Charles and the old miser. Eugénie, bolder still, went up a couple of stairs.

"Well, nephew, you're in great trouble, of course. It's very natural you should cry. A father is a father. But we must bear our troubles patiently. I have been thinking about you, while you've been crying. I'm not a bad sort of relation, after all. Come, pluck up your courage. Will you have a glass of wine?"

Wine costs nothing at Saumur, and it is offered there as freely as tea is in China.

"But," said Grandet, continuing, "you've got no light. That won't do; we must see what we're doing."

Grandet walked towards the chimneypiece.

"Halloa!" he cried, "here is a wax candle. Where the devil did they get this wax candle from? These women would take up the flooring itself to boil that young fellow's eggs with."

No sooner did they hear these words, than the mother and daughter returned to their bedrooms and hid themselves in their beds, with the speed of terrified mice making their escape back again to their holes.

"So you've got a secret treasure somewhere, Madame Grandet?" he said, as he entered his wife's bedroom.

"I am saying my prayers," replied the poor mother, with a trembling voice, "wait a little."

"Deuce take your prayers!" replied Grandet grumblingly.

Misers have no faith in a future state; the present is all in all to them. This reflection throws a horrible light upon the present age, in which, more than at any other period, money influences and governs the laws, politics, and morals of the country. Institutions, books, men, and doctrines, everything, in fact, conspire to undermine that belief in a future state upon which the social fabric has been supported for the last eighteen hundred years. At present the shroud is a transition which is regarded with but little apprehension. The future which awaited us beyond the grave has been transposed into this present life. To attain, by honest or dishonest means, the earthly paradise of luxurious yet vain enjoyments, to indurate the heart, and to mortify the body in the sight of worldly possessions, fleeting in the gratification they afford (just as in former times men suffered martyrdom in this life with visions of eternal happiness before them), seems to be the general idea—an idea, moreover, which will be found recorded in every direction, even in the laws, which ask a man, "What do you pay?" instead of asking him, "What is the subject of your thoughts?" When this doctrine shall have passed from the trading classes to the people generally, what, it may be asked, will then become of the country?

"Madame Grandet, have you finished?" said the old cooper.

"I am praying for you, Grandet."

"Very well ! good night ! We will have some talk together to-morrow morning."

The poor woman went to sleep with the same dread as a school-boy would feel, who, having neglected to learn his lessons, is afraid of seeing his master's angry face as soon as he wakes up.

Just as when, from sheer nervous terror, she covered herself over with the bedclothes to avoid hearing anything, Eugénie, with bare feet, crept stealthily to the bedside with only her night-dress on, and, stooping down, kissed her mother's forehead.

"My dear good mother," she said, "to-morrow I will tell him that I did it."

"No, he will send you away to Noyers. Leave it to me, he can't eat me."

"Do you hear, mamma ? "

"What ? "

"*He* is weeping still."

"Go to bed, my child. You will get your feet cold ; the brick flooring is quite damp."

Thus passed the solemn day which was destined to weigh so heavily upon the whole life of the rich yet poor heiress, whose slumbers were neither so undisturbed nor so guileless as they had hitherto been. Very frequently certain actions of human life appear, literally speaking, improbable, though true. But may not this be, because we almost always omit to diffuse over our spontaneous determinations a sort of psychological light, by the non-explanation of the reasons, mysteriously conceived, which have necessitated them ? Perhaps the profound passion with which Eugénie's heart was

filled, should be analyzed in its most delicate fibres for it became what certain persons, jestingly disposed, might term a positive malady, and influenced her whole existence. There are many who prefer far sooner to deny the issues of events than to ascertain the strength of the ties, the bonds, the fastenings whereby one fact is secretly soldered to another in the moral order. Here, therefore, Eugénie's past life, for those who are critical observers of human nature, will serve as a guarantee for the *naveté* of her want of reflection, and the sudden outpourings of her heart. From the very fact of the tranquillity of her past life, a feeling of feminine sympathy, the most ingenuous of all feelings, pervaded her whole being. And, therefore, disturbed and unsettled by the various events of the day, she awoke several times during the night to listen to her cousin, fancying that she still heard his sighs, which, ever since the previous evening, had found an echo in her own heart. At one moment she fancied she saw him expiring from grief, at another she dreamt that he was dying from hunger. Towards the morning, however, she did, in fact, hear a deep groan from her cousin's apartment. She dressed herself immediately, and just as day was dawning, hurried with a light step towards Charles's room, the door of which had remained unclosed. The candle had burnt down into the socket. Overpowered by exhaustion, her cousin, not having undressed since the previous day, was seated in a chair fast asleep, with his head thrown back, resting against the bed. He was dreaming, as people always do who have remained without food for some time. Eugénie

could now weep without fear of interruption, and could admire at her leisure his youthful and handsome face, which, even in his sleep, bore evident marks of grief, while his eyes, swollen from long weeping and closed as they were in slumber, appeared still to shed tears. Charles seemed sympathetically to be aware of Eugénie's presence in his room, and, as he opened his eyes, he perceived her pitying looks bent upon him.

"I beg your pardon, cousin," he said, evidently unaware either of the time or of the place where he was.

"There are hearts here who understand you, cousin," she replied, "and *we* thought that you might be in want of something. You ought to go to bed; you are fatiguing yourself by remaining as you are."

"True," he said.

"Very well, then, adieu."

And she hurried away, ashamed, yet happy, that she had been to see him. Innocence alone is capable of similar acts of fearlessness of consequences. When properly enlightened, virtue can calculate in every respect as shrewdly as vice. Eugénie who, when near her cousin, had not even trembled could hardly stand when she reached her own room.

Her untutored, uninformed life, had suddenly ceased; she reasoned with, she reproached herself, over and over again. "What idea will he not form of me? He will believe that I love him," she said to herself, and yet this was precisely what, most of all, she wished him to believe. A guileless affection has its prescience, and knows that love begets love. What an event for this young, secluded girl, to have entered a young

man's apartment in so stealthy a manner. Are there not certain thoughts, and certain actions, which, in love, with some people, almost resemble holy espousals? An hour afterwards she went to her mother's room, and helped her to dress, in accordance with her wonted custom. They then sat down in their usual places before the window, and awaited Grandet's arrival, with that nervous anxiety which chills or warms the heart, contracts or accelerates its pulsation, whenever, according to a person's nature, there may exist a reason for dreading a scene, or a punishment; a feeling which is, besides, so natural that even domestic animals show that they are subject to it by crying out at the slightest correction administered to them, while, on the other hand, they are silently uncomplaining whenever they hurt themselves inadvertently. Grandet came downstairs, but, addressing his wife with a pre-occupied air, and kissing Eugénie, he sat down to his breakfast, without seeming to think of his threats of the previous evening.

"Where has my nephew got to? he don't get in the way, certainly."

"He is fast asleep," replied Nanon.

"So much the better, as in that case he won't want any wax candle," said the cooper in a bantering tone.

This unusual forbearance, this grim cheerfulness, struck Madame Grandet with surprise, who looked at her husband very attentively. *Le bonhomme*, or good man, as he was called—and this, perhaps, is not an unsuitable place to remark that in Touraine, in Anjou, in Poitou, and in Brittany, the word *bonhomme*, which has been employed to designate Grandet, is bestowed,

not only upon the most uncompassionate, but also upon the most stupidly good-natured men, as soon as they attain a certain age ; and this title in no way presupposes anything with respect to a man's amiability of disposition. The *bonhomme*, then, took up his hat and his gloves, and said,—

“ I am going to lounge about a little on the Place, and look out for the Cruchots.”

“ Eugénie, there is certainly something the matter with your father.”

The fact is that Grandet, who slept but little, employed half of his nights in the formation of those preliminary calculations which gave to all his views, his observations, and his plans, that amazing accuracy and precision, whereby that unfailing success, which bewildered and astounded his fellow-townsmen, was attained. All human power is a compound of patience and time. Persons of energetic, vigorous characters, determine on a course and bide their opportunity. The miser's existence, however, is a constant exercise of human energy, untiringly employed in his own personal service. He relies but upon two feelings, self-love and self-interest ; but self-interest being, in some respects, a determined and distinctly defined self-love, a continuous attestation of a positive superiority, they form two parts of one and the same entire whole—egotism. Hence arises, perhaps, that prodigious curiosity which misers excite, when prominently brought into view. Every man is connected by a thread with this class of individuals who appeal to all human feelings because they comprise all. Where is the man free from a yearning desire of

some kind, and what social desire exists that money cannot gratify? There was indeed *something* the matter with Grandet, to use his wife's expression. There arose in him, as there arises in all miserly men, a strong pressing need to test his abilities with other men, to gain their money from them in a legal manner. Is not the fact of being able to overawe others the exercise of an act of power and authority? and does it not perpetually confer upon some the right of despising those who, from their weakness, unresistingly yield themselves a prey to others? Oh! who has not fully realized the idea of the lamb, peacefully reposing at the feet of the Almighty Father, the most touching emblem of all earthly victims ever offered up, an emblem of their future state—in a word, human suffering and weakness glorified together. And yet the miser suffers this lamb to feed and fatten, he pens it, kills, dresses, eats, and despises it. Money and scorn are the staple of the miser's food. The ideas of the *bonhomme*, therefore, had during the night taken another direction, and hence the reason of his present clemency. He had formed a plan whereby he would laugh at these Parisians, would torture them, roll them round his fingers, mould them at his will, make them go or come at his bidding, sweat with anxiety, sicken or grow pale with hope deferred, and amuse himself at their expense, he, the old vine-grower, seated in his dingy-looking *salle*, or as he slowly ascended the rotten staircase of his house at Saumur. His mind had been dwelling on the position of his nephew. He wished to save the honour of his dead brother, without the cost of a sou, either to himself or his brother's

son. He was about to invest all the ready money he possessed for a certain period of three years, and the only occupation left him would be that of looking after his property; he needed, therefore, a sustenance of some kind for his pitiless activity of mind; and this had been afforded him in his brother's failure. Feeling that he held nothing in his paws out of which he could squeeze anything for his own advantage, he wished to crush these Parisians for Charles's sake, and thereby show himself in the light of an excellent brother at a very little cost. The honour of the family entered so little into his plan, that his goodness of feeling in the matter may be compared to that want which all players experience when they are mere spectators of a game in which they have no stake. Though the Cruchots were necessary for the purpose he had in view, yet he would not go to look after them; but he had resolved that they should come to his house, and that very evening begin the comedy, the scenes of which he had previously planned and arranged, in order that he might become, the very next day, and without the expenditure of a farthing out of his own pocket, the object of the admiration of *his* town.

During her father's absence, Eugénie enjoyed the happiness of unreservedly occupying herself about her dearly loved cousin, of bestowing upon him, fully and freely, and without fear, the rich treasures of her pity, one of the sublimest virtues which women possess, the only one in which a woman wishes her superiority to be perceived and acknowledged, and the only one she forgives a man for permitting her to excel him in.

Three or four times did Eugénie go to her cousin's room to listen to his breathing, to see if he were asleep or awake ; and, when he at last arose, the cream, coffee, eggs and fruit, the plates and glass, everything, indeed, which formed part of the breakfast-service, was the object of her particular care. She ran lightly up the stairs to listen to the slightest sound from her cousin's room. Was he dressing himself, or was he still weeping ? She approached his door.

"Cousin Charles ?" she exclaimed.

"Yes, Eugénie," he replied.

"Will you breakfast in the *salle* or in your own room ?"

"Wherever you please."

"How are you now ?"

"I am ashamed to say I am hungry, my dear cousin."

This conversation, which took place through the door was like a romantic episode in Eugénie's life.

"Very well, then ; we will bring your breakfast up to your room, so as to avoid annoying my father."

And she ran down to the kitchen with the lightness of a bird.

"Nanon, go and put my cousin's room to rights."

The staircase which she had so frequently passed up and down, and which re-echoed to the slightest sound, now seemed to Eugénie to have entirely lost its old and dilapidated appearance ; to her it seemed full of brightness, it spoke to her, it was young like herself, young like the affection which influenced her every act. Her mother, too, her kind and indulgent mother, could not refuse compliance with the fancies of her affection ;

and as soon as Charles's room was finished, they both went to bear their relation company in his sorrow and distress.

"Does not Christian charity command us to try and console him?" They both drew from religion a good number of little sophisms to justify themselves for their seeming impropriety of conduct, and Charles Grandet found himself, consequently, the object of their most affectionate and sympathizing solicitude. His aching heart was most keenly alive to the sweet impression of that tender friendship, of that exquisite sympathy, which those two beings, living under perpetual restraint, knew so perfectly how to display, when they found themselves, for a brief moment, unfettered in the midst of suffering, their natural sphere. Under the plea of relationship, Eugénie busied herself with the arrangement of her cousin's linen, and of the different articles for his dressing-table, which he had brought with him, and to her heart's content she could bend her wondering gaze upon the various costly knick-knacks and trinkets of silver and gold which she came across, and which she held a long time in her hand under the pretext of admiring them. Charles could not observe, without the profoundest emotion, the generous interest which his aunt and cousin took in him; he knew society in Paris sufficiently well to be perfectly sure that in his present position he would have found only cold or indifferent hearts awaiting him there. Eugénie appeared to him in all the splendour of her own peculiar style of beauty; and, from that moment, he admired the innocence of those manners which he had derided on the previous

evening. When Eugénie, therefore, took from Nanon's hands the common earthenware bowl full of *café à la crème*, and placed it before him with an innocent artlessness of feeling, accompanying it at the same time with a look full of sympathetic kindness, the tears rushed to his eyes, and he took hold of her hand and kissed it.

"What is the matter?" she inquired.

"They are tears of gratitude, Eugénie," he replied.

Eugénie turned suddenly towards the chimney-piece, and, taking up the candlesticks, said—

"Nanon, take these away."

When she looked at her cousin, her face was still suffused with blushes, but her eyes, at least, could speak falsely, and not reveal the wild delight with which her heart was filled. Their eyes, however, expressed one and the same feeling, while their minds were wrapped in one and the same thought. The future was their own. This sweet emotion was especially grateful to Charles, amidst the bitterness of the grief that overwhelmed him, inasmuch as he had so little calculated upon it. A knock at the street door summoned the mother and daughter to their places below; they were fortunately able to hurry downstairs in sufficient time to resume their work before Grandet entered. If he had met them in the passage, nothing more would have been needed to arouse his suspicions. When they had finished breakfast, which he partook of without sitting down, the gamekeeper, who had never yet received the recompense which had been promised him for his services, arrived from Froidfond, bringing with him a hare and several partridges which had been killed in

the park, together with some eels and a couple of jack, owing by his tenants the millers.

"Ah! ah! here's poor Cornoiller; he has come like salt fish in Lent. Is what you've got there good to eat?"

"Yes, my dear generous gentleman; they were killed only two days ago."

"Here, Nanon, you ne'er-do-well," said her master; "take these, they will do for dinner; I am going to invite the two Cruchots."

Nanon opened her eyes with a stupid look of amazement, and stared at everybody.

"Very good," she said; "but where am I to get the butter and spice from?"

"Wife," said Grandet, "give Nanon six francs, and don't forget to remind me to go and get some good wine out of the cellar."

"Well, Monsieur Grandet," began the keeper again, who had prepared his speech in order to have the question about his wages settled at last; "Monsieur Grandet——"

"Ta! ta! ta! ta!" said the miser, "I know what you mean. You are a good sort of fellow, and we shall see all about it; but I am busy now. Wife," said he, to Madame Grandet, "give him a five-franc piece."

And then he hurried away. The poor woman was only too happy to purchase peace at the cost of eleven francs. She knew that Grandet would not say a word for a whole fortnight after he had cheated her of a few francs in this way.

"Here, Cornoiller," she said, giving him ten francs:

"we shall not forget to acknowledge your services some day."

Cornoiller had nothing to say ; and so took his leave.

"Madame," said Nanon, who had put on her black cap, and had got her basket in her hand, "I shan't want more than three francs ; so keep the rest, it'll be all the same."

"Let us have a good dinner, Nanon, my cousin will come downstairs."

"There is something extraordinary the matter, I feel sure," said Madame Grandet. "This is only the third time since our marriage that your father has invited any one to dinner."

Towards four o'clock, at the very moment Eugénie and her mother had finished laying the dinner-table for six persons, and the master of the house had brought up from the cellar several bottles of those exquisitely-flavoured wines of which the provincials delight to keep a stock in hand, Charles entered the *salle*. He was pale, while his mien, his countenance, his looks, and the tone of his voice, wore an air of sadness which was most touching. He did not affect an air of suffering, for he suffered really ; and the veil, which his heavy affliction seemed to have spread over his face, gave him that interesting appearance which so readily excites a woman's sympathy. Eugénie loved him more tenderly than ever on account of it ; nor is it improbable that his misfortune drew him still closer to her heart. Charles was no longer a rich and handsome young man placed in a sphere which she could never approach ; no, he was a kinsman plunged in the deepest and direst misery ;

and misery levels all distinctions. A woman has this quality in common with the angels, that those who are in sorrow and distress are objects of their own peculiar tenderness. Charles and Eugénie understood and spoke to each other with their eyes only; for the orphan, the poor dandy, so fallen from his high estate, had stationed himself in a corner where he remained, silent, calm, and proudly reserved; but every other moment, his cousin's gentle, caressing look seemed to shed brightness on him, forced him to throw aside his bitter thoughts, and hurry with her to those regions of hope and a time to come, in which she loved to find herself associated with him. At that moment the town of Saumur was more excited by the news of the dinner to which Grandet had invited the Cruchots than it had been on the previous evening by the sale of the produce of his vintage, which had constituted a crime of high treason against the vine-growing community. If the politic old vine-grower had given his dinner-party with the same idea as that with which Alcibiades cut off his dog's tail, he would perhaps have been a great man; but, far superior to a town which was the object of his repeated mockery, he treated Saumur with the greatest indifference. The Des Grassins soon learned the violent death and the probable insolvency of Charles's father, and they determined that very evening to pay their neighbour a visit, not alone for the purpose of sympathizing with him in his affliction, and of testifying their friendship for him, but also of ascertaining the motives which could possibly have induced him to invite, at such a season, the two Cruchots to dinner.

At five o'clock precisely, the president C. de Bonfons and his uncle the notary arrived, dressed in their very best. They took their places at table, and began to eat with very excellent appetites. Grandet was serious, Charles silent, Eugénie dumb, and Madame Grandet spoke no more than she usually did ; so that the dinner was in every respect one of sympathy and condolence.

When they rose from the table, Charles said to his aunt and uncle : " Will you allow me to retire to my room ; I have a long and melancholy correspondence to attend to ? "

" Do so, nephew."

When he had left the room, and when the *bonhomme* had reason to believe that Charles was out of hearing, and must by that time be immersed in his writings, he gave his wife a peculiar look.

" Madame Grandet, what we are going to talk about would be all Greek to you ; it's half-past seven, and the best thing you can do is to go to bed. Good night, Eugénie."

He embraced Eugénie, and the mother and daughter quitted the apartment. A scene then arose in which Grandet, more than at any other moment of his life perhaps, brought into play that peculiar address which he had acquired in his intercourse with men, and which had frequently gained for him, from those whom he had succeeded in overreaching, the appellation of a cunning old dog. If the mayor of Saumur had but carried his ambitious pretensions somewhat higher, or if, by a series of fortunate circumstances, he had succeeded in attaining the superior grades of society, and had thereby

formed a member of those councils in which the affairs of nations are discussed, and had there availed himself of that genius which so greatly distinguished him when his own personal interest was at stake, there is no doubt he would have rendered great and glorious services to France. And yet it is, perhaps, equally probable that, out of Saumur, the *bonhomme* would have played but a sorry part; nor is it unlikely either that the same rule applies to minds which applies to animals, which cease to bear as soon as they have been transplanted from the climates where they were born.

"Mon-mon-monsieur le Pré-pré-président, you were say-say-saying that in-in-insol-ven-ven-vency——"

The stammering utterance which Grandet had affected for so long a period, and which was regarded as a natural defect, as well as the deafness of which he always complained in rainy weather, became, in the present conjuncture, so very irksome to the two Cruchots, that, as they sat listening to the wine-grower, they could not refrain from attempting to finish the words in which he seemed to be hopelessly floundering about.

This is, perhaps, not an inopportune occasion to give the history of Grandet's stuttering propensity and of his deafness. No one understood more thoroughly, or could articulate with more distinctness than the wily vine-grower, the French spoken in the province of Anjou. It had happened, however, on a certain occasion, that, in spite of all his cunning wiles, he had been outreached by an Israelite, who, in the course of conversation, had placed his hand to his ear like an ear-trumpet, under the pretence that he could thereby hear better, and had

stuttered so much in choosing his words, that Grandet, the victim of his own humanity, fancied himself obliged to suggest to the cunning Jew the words and ideas which the Jew seemed to be in search of, to complete the said Jew's chain of reasoning, to speak as the infernal Jew should speak; in one word, to be the Jew and not Grandet; a singular encounter, which terminated in the completion, by the cooper, of the only bargain which he ever had to regret in the whole course of his commercial life. But if, in a pecuniary point of view, he was a loser on that occasion, he, morally speaking, thereby learnt a lesson, which he turned to advantage at a later period. And the *bonhomme* ended by blessing the Jew who had taught him the art of making his commercial adversary lose his patience; so that, while the latter was engaged in expressing his (Grandet's) thought, Grandet made him constantly lose sight of his own. In point of fact, no matter of business, so much as the one which was now under discussion, required to a greater extent the employment of deafness, stammering, and also of that incomprehensible discursive mode of talking in which Grandet always enveloped his ideas. In the first place, he would not seem to accept the responsibility of his own ideas; and in the next, he did not wish to betray the meaning of his words, but wished rather to leave his true intentions unexplained.

“Monsieur de Bon-Bon-Bonfons —”

For the second time during the last three years, Grandet called Cruchot the nephew, Monsieur de Bonfons, thereby tacitly allowing the President to fancy that he had been chosen by the cunning old miser as his son-in-law.

“You were say-say-saying just now that ban-

ban-bankruptcies can in cer-certain cases be pre-pre-prevented by——”

“By the Tribunals of Commerce. That is a case of everyday occurrence,” said Monsieur C. de Bonfons, seizing hold of Grandet’s idea, or fancying he guessed what it was, and considerately wishing to explain it to him. “Listen.”

“I am listening,” replied Grandet meekly, with the sly look which a child would assume who is inwardly laughing at his master, while all the time he is pretending to pay the greatest attention to his explanation.

“When a man of high position, and held in high esteem, as, for instance, your deceased brother at Paris was——”

“My brother, yes.”

“Is threatened with insolvency—

“You ca-ca-call that in-in-sol-sol-vency?”

“Yes; and when his suspension of payment becomes imminent, the Tribunal of Commerce, to which he is amenable (follow me closely), has the power, by a decree, to nominate what are termed liquidators of his house of business. To liquidate is not to become a bankrupt; do you understand? When a man becomes a bankrupt, he is a dishonoured man; but by liquidating, as it is termed, he remains an honest man.”

“That is very di-di-di-different, and does not co-co-cost any more, I suppose,” said Grandet.

“But a liquidation can also take place, even without the assistance of the Tribunal of Commerce. For,” said the President, taking a pinch of snuff, “how is an act of bankruptcy declared?”

"Yes, I ne-ne-never thought of th-th-that," replied Grandet.

"In the first place," resumed the magistrate, "by filing his schedule at the office of the tribunal, which the merchant either does himself, or by his agent acting under his power of attorney duly registered; in the second place, at the request of his creditors. However, supposing that the merchant does not file his schedule, or that none of his creditors apply to the tribunal for a judgment declaring the aforesaid merchant a bankrupt, what then would happen?"

"Ex-exactly; tell me."

"In that case, the family of the deceased, his representatives, those who have the right of inheritance, or the merchant himself, if he be still alive, or his friends, if he be hiding out of the way, liquidate instead. Perhaps you would like to liquidate your brother's affairs?" inquired the President.

"Ah! Grandet!" exclaimed the notary, "that would be admirable. We men in the provinces, you know, are not without our points of honour. If you were to save your name, for it is your name after all, it would be——"

"Sublime," said the President, interrupting his uncle.

"Certainly," replied the old vine-grower, "my, my br-br-brother's na-na-name is Grandet, like my own. Th-there's no doubt of th-th-that. I can't de-de-deny it. And this li-li-liquidation might in a-a-any case, and in e-e-every re-re-respect, be very ad-ad-advantageous to my ne-ne-nephew's in-in-interests, of whom I'm ve-ve-very fond. But we must see. I kn-kn-know nothing about th-th-those sharp fellows at Paris. I am at Saumur, you

know. There are my v-v-vines, my d-d-drains, in fact, all s-s-sorts of b-b-business. I have never given any bills ; what is a bill ? I have re-re-received a good many, but I have ne-ne-never s-s-signed my name to one. They can be ca-ca-cashed, and dis-dis-counted, I know, and th-th-that is a-a-all I know. I have heard it s-s-said th-th-that these b-b-bills might be g-g-got back."

" Yes," said the President, " the bills could be bought up on 'change in consideration of so much per cent. Do you understand ? "

Grandet made a trumpet of his hand and put it to his ear, while the President repeated his remark.

" But," replied the vine-grower, " there's a g-g-good deal of ex-ex-expense in all that. At my a-a-age I can't kn-kn-know much about s-s-such things. I must remain here to look after my crops. Crops in-in-increase, and it is the cr-cr-crops that en-en-enable a man to pay. The pr-pr-principal th-thing is to look after the cr-cr-crops. I have some mo-mo-most important and in-in-teresting af-af-affairs to look after at Froidfond. I can't le-le-leave my house to bo-bo-both myself with th-th-things I know no-no-thing about. You say, that, in or-order to li-li-liquidate, or to pre-pre-prevent the declaration of bankruptcy, I ought to be in Paris. One can't be in t-t-two places at once, unless one be a lit-lit-little bird, a-a-and——"

" I understand you," exclaimed the notary. " But, my old friend, have you not friends, old friends, who are able to show their devotion for you ? "

" Well, then," thought the vine-grower to himself, " why can't you make up your mind ? "

"And if some one set off for Paris, went to your brother William's largest creditor, and said to him——"

"St-st-stay a mo-mo-moment," interrupted Grandet ; "say to him what ? Some-some-something like th-th-this, I suppose : Monsieur Grandet of Saumur here, Monsieur Gran-det-det of Saumur there. He loves his brother, and his nephew too. Grandet is a v-v-very good relation, and his in-in-intentions, too, are good. He sold his vin-vin-vintage very well. Don't de-de-declare a ba-ba-bankruptcy, call a me-me-meeting, and name certain li-li-liquidators. Gr-Gr-Grandet will th-th-then come forward. You'll be su-su-sure to get far more by li-li-liquidating, than by letting the law-law-lawyers thrust their no-no-noses in. Isn't that true ? "

"Quite !" said the President.

"Because, you see, Monsieur de Bon-Bon-Bonfons, one must l-l-look before one de-de-decides. What c-c-can't be done, c-c-can't be done. In any se-se-serious undertaking, a man, to sa-sa-save himself from being ru-ru-ruined, must first know wh-wh-what the means and the co-co-costs are. Isn't that true ? "

"Certainly," said the President. "My own opinion is, that, in a few months' time, the debts can be bought in for a certain sum, and can be cleared off entirely by arrangement. Ah ! ah ! dogs can be led a long way by showing them a piece of meat. When there has been no declaration of bankruptcy, and you hold the securities in your own hand, you will be as white as snow."

"As s-s-snow," repeated Grandet, again making an ear-trumpet of his hand. "I don't know what you m-m-mean by s-s-snow."

"Well, then, listen to me for a moment," cried the President.

"I am li-li-listening."

"A bill of exchange or any similar document is a commodity which is subject to rise and fall in value like anything else. This is a deduction from the principle laid down by Jeremy Bentham on usury. That publicist has proved that the prejudice which visits usurers with obloquy was an absurdity."

"Really," said the *bonhomme*.

"Considering that, in principle, according to Bentham, money is a commodity, and that that which represents money becomes a commodity, too," resumed the President; "considering that it is a matter of notoriety, that, subjected to the usual variations which influence commercial affairs, the bill-of-exchange commodity, bearing such or such a signature, like such or such an article, either limited or abundant in its supply, that it is either dear or falls to a merely nominal value, the tribunal decrees—(dear me! how stupid I am! pray, excuse me!)—I am of opinion that you will be able to buy up your brother's obligations for five-and-twenty per cent."

"You s-s-said his name was Je-Je-Jeremy Ben——"

"Bentham, an Englishman."

"That Jeremy will make us steer clear of a good many occasions for regret in business," said the notary, laughing.

"These English are some-some-sometimes not de-de-deficient in common sense," said Grandet. "So that, ac-ac-according to Ben-Ben-Bentham, if my bro-bro-

brother's bills were to re-re-realize—were not to re-re-realize. If, I say—I am right, am I-I-I not? It seems qu-qu-quite clear to me—the creditors would—no, would not. I un-understand.”

“Let me explain it all to you,” said the President. “In law, if you hold in your own hands the documents which represent the sums owing by the house of Grandet, neither your brother nor his heirs would be indebted to any one. Good.”

“Good,” repeated the *bonhomme*.

“In equity, if your brother's bills are negotiated (you understand the meaning of the term negotiated) on the Exchange at a loss of so much per cent. ; if one of your friends happened to be there, if he bought them up, the creditors having in no way been compelled to give them up, the estate of the late Grandet of Paris would be honourably discharged.”

“True, bu-bu-business is business!” said the cooper. “That's a-a-greed. But yet you can un-un-understand that it's not an e-e-easy matter. I-I-I have neither money nor-nor-nor time, nor time, nor——”

“Of course, you cannot leave. Very good, then! I propose that I should go to Paris (you will take the journey into consideration, it is a mere nothing). I shall see the creditors there, will talk to them, get time allowed for payment, and everything will be settled by means of a supplementary payment which you will add to what the liquidation realizes in order to get back the documents which your brother's creditors hold in their hands.”

“We must see a-a-about that; I can-can-cannot, and

I-I will not, bi-bi-bind myself without, without—— If one c-c-can't, one c-can't. You understand ? ”

“ That's perfectly true.”

“ My-my head's quite con-con-confused with wh-wh-what you've been saying. This is th-th-the first time in my life I've been obliged to th-th-think of——”

“ Yes ; you are no lawyer, of course.”

“ I-I am nothing but a p-p-poor vine-grower, and know no-no-nothing what you've been ta-ta-talking about ; I must th-th-think it over.”

“ Very good ! ” resumed the President, arranging himself in his chair as if to continue the discussion.

“ Nephew ! ” said the notary in a tone of expostulation, interrupting him.

“ Well, uncle,” replied the President.

“ Let Monsieur Grandet explain what his views are. It is a question at this moment of an important mission : our good friend is about to indicate clear——”

A knock at the door, which announced the arrival of the Des Grassins family, their entrance, and their reception by Grandet, prevented Cruchot from completing his phrase. The notary was by no means dissatisfied at this interruption. Already was Grandet beginning to look suspiciously at him, and the wen on his nose indicated that an internal commotion was brewing. But, in the first place, the prudent notary did not consider it proper for a President of the Tribunal of the First Instance to go to Paris to make terms with creditors, and to lend his assistance to an underhand dealing which clashed with the laws of strict probity. Next, not having yet heard Grandet express the slightest desire to pay

anything whatever, he trembled, instinctively, to see his nephew embark in this affair. He therefore took advantage of the entrance of the Des Grassins to take hold of the President by the arm, and lead him into the recess of the window.

“ You have shown yourself quite enough, nephew ; but no more devotion like that. The wish to get hold of the daughter completely blinds you. You must not run head-foremost, without looking where you are going to. Leave me to steer the ship, only help me to work it. Do you think it quite your place to run the risk of compromising your dignity as a magistrate in a——”

He did not finish, for he heard Monsieur de Grassins saying to the old cooper, holding out his hand to him at the same time : “ We have learnt, Grandet, the terrible misfortune which has happened in your family, the disaster which has befallen the house of Guillaume Grandet, and the death of your brother ; and we have come to express to you how greatly we are concerned at this sad event.”

“ The only misfortune to deplore,” said the notary, interrupting the banker, “ is the death of Monsieur Grandet, junior. He would not have destroyed himself, perhaps, had the idea occurred to him to summon his brother to his assistance. Our old friend, who is the soul of honour, intends to discharge the debts of the house of Grandet at Paris. My nephew the President, in order to save him the trouble and annoyance of an affair which is so completely legal in its nature, has offered to set off immediately for Paris, in order to make

terms with the creditors, and to satisfy them in a proper and becoming manner."

These words, which the attitude of the old cooper, who stood by rubbing his hand over his chin, seemed to confirm, took the Des Grassins completely by surprise ; for, on their way to the house, they had been most unsparing in their comments on Grandet's avarice, and had almost accused him of being guilty of his brother's death.

" Ha ! I was sure of that ! " exclaimed the banker, looking at his wife. " Did I not say to you as I came along, Madame de Grassins, that Grandet was honour itself, and that he would never allow the slightest breath of suspicion on his name. Honour is a thing not unknown in our provinces. That is good, Grandet, very good. I am an old soldier, and don't pretend to know how to disguise my thoughts, and I say bluntly, that is sublime, I'm hanged if it isn't."

" At all e-e-vents, the sub-sub-lime costs a go-go-good deal," replied the *bonhomme*, as the banker shook him warmly by the hand.

" But this, my excellent friend, with all deference to the President here," resumed De Grassins, " is entirely a commercial matter, and requires an experienced and thorough man of business. It will require a man who understands all about rebate, disbursements, calculations of interest, &c. I must go to Paris for my own affairs, and I can at the same time take charge of——"

" We will see th-th-then, if we can't c-come to some mu-mu-mutual arrangement about th-th-the matter, and without bi-bi-binding myself to anything wh-wh-which I should not li-li-like to do," said Grandet stuttering ;

"because, you see, Monsieur le Président naturally enough asked me for the expenses of the journey." These latter words were pronounced without the slightest stammering.

"Ah," said Madame de Grassins, "it is a delight to be able to be at Paris. I would myself willingly pay to go there."

And she made a sign to her husband as if to encourage him to deprive their adversaries of this commission, whatever the cost might be ; and then looked ironically at the two Cruchots, who seemed completely crest-fallen.

Grandet seized hold of the banker by one of the buttons of his coat, and drew him aside into a corner.

"I should have far more confidence in you than in the President," he said ; "besides, there are snakes in the grass," he added ; "I wish to try my hand at the funds ; I want to get a few thousand francs invested, and I don't want to invest till they stand at 80 francs ; there is always a fall, it is said, towards the end of the month. You know that, I suppose, very well ? "

"I should think so. Well, I shall have some thousands of francs to buy in for you, then ? "

"Not a great deal to begin with. *Mum !* I wish to dabble a little without any one knowing anything about it. You will effect a purchase for me for the end of the month ; but not a word to the Cruchots ; for it will only put them out. Since you are going to Paris, we will see, at the same time, for my poor nephew's sake, how the cards look."

"That is an understood thing, then ; I shall set off

to-morrow by post," said De Grassins aloud, "and I will come to get your last instructions at—what time shall I say?"

"At five o'clock, before dinner," said the vine-grower, rubbing his hands.

They both remained together for a few minutes longer. De Grassins said, after a pause, slapping Grandet on the shoulder, "It is not a bad thing to have kind relations like you——"

"Yes, yes, without showing it," replied Grandet, "I am not a bad sort of relation after all. I loved my brother, and I will show it well, too, if it don't cost——"

"We are going to leave you, Grandet," said the banker, fortunately interrupting him before he had finished his phrase; "since I must now hasten my journey, I shall have several matters to arrange beforehand."

"Very good. For my part, with respect to you know what, I shall retire to my chamber of deliberations, as *the President Cruchot* says."

"Peste! I am no longer Monsieur de Bonfons, it seems," thought the magistrate ruefully, his face assuming an expression of judicial melancholy, the expression of a magistrate bored by a counsel's speech. The heads of the two rival families went off together. Neither of them thought any longer of the treason which Grandet had been guilty of that very morning towards the whole vine-growing district, and reciprocally sounded each other, but uselessly so, in order to learn what their opinions were upon the old miser's real intentions with respect to this new affair.

"Will you go with us to Madame d'Orsouval?" said De Grassins to the notary.

"We shall go a little later," replied the President. "I promised to pay Mademoiselle de Gribeaucourt a short visit this evening, and, if my uncle has no objection, we will go there first."

"Good bye, then, for the present, gentlemen," said Madame de Grassins.

When they were at a little distance from the Cruchots, Adolphe said to his father, "They smell a rat, don't they?"

"Hold your tongue," retorted his mother, "they can hear; besides, your remark is a very vulgar one, and savours too much of the law school."

"Well, uncle," exclaimed the magistrate, when he observed the Des Grassins at a distance, "I began by being the President de Bonfons, and ended by being a Cruchot and nothing more."

"I saw very well that you were put out; but the wind was in the Des Grassins' favour. Are you so stupid, notwithstanding your cleverness? Let them embark in the affair if they like, upon one of Père Grandet's '*we shall see*;' and make yourself easy, my boy, Eugénie shall be your wife, all the same."

In a few minutes the intelligence of Grandet's magnanimous resolution was circulated in three houses at once. This brotherly devotion was the sole subject of conversation in the whole town. Every one forgave him the sale which he had effected in breach of the solemn promise to which all the proprietors had bound themselves, extolling his sense of honour, and eulogizing a generosity of which

they had no idea he was capable. It is the French character to become enthusiastic, or to take fire, or to grow enamoured of the meteor of the moment, of a mere transient or fugitive matter of fact. Are a collection of individuals, nations for instance, incapable of the resemblance of what has happened in years gone by ?

When Grandet had shut the door, he called Nanon.

“ Don’t let the dog loose, and don’t sleep a wink ; we have work to do together. At eleven o’clock Cornoiller will be at the door here with the covered berlin from Froidfond. Listen for his arrival so as to prevent him knocking, and tell him to come in very softly. The police regulations forbid any noise at night ; besides, there is no need for the neighbours to know that I am going to start on a journey.”

With these words, Grandet went up to his study, where Nanon heard him rummaging about, moving backwards and forwards in the room, but with the greatest possible precaution. Evidently he wished to avoid awaking his wife or his daughter, and particularly not to arouse his nephew’s attention, whom he had begun to swear at in round terms when he perceived a light in his room. In the middle of the night, Eugénie, her mind occupied with her cousin, fancied she heard groans as of some one dying, and, to her imagination, this could be none other than Charles, for she remembered how pale and broken-hearted she had left him. Perhaps he had destroyed himself ! Suddenly, she threw a mantle around her, and was about to leave her room, when, all at once, a strong light, which streamed through the chinks of her door, made her fear

the house was on fire ; she was speedily reassured, however, on this point, by hearing Nanon's voice and heavy footsteps above the sound of the neighing of horses.

"Is my father going to carry off my cousin?" she thought, as she slightly opened her door, taking every possible precaution to prevent it being heard, yet so as to see what was taking place in the corridor.

Suddenly, her eye met her father's ; his look, notwithstanding its vague and unconcerned character, chilled her with an indefinable feeling of terror. Grandet and Nanon were yoked together by a thick pole, the ends resting upon their right shoulders, and from which pole was suspended a strong rope supporting a small cask or barrel like those which Grandet amused himself in manufacturing in his workshop during his leisure moments.

"Holy virgin, monsieur, it's heavy!" said Nanon, in a low voice.

"What a pity that they're nothing but sous, Nanon," replied her master. "Take care you don't knock against the candlestick."

The scene was lighted up by a single candle placed between two of the rails of the banister.

"Cornoiller," said Grandet to his gamekeeper *in partibus*, "have you got your pistols?"

"No, monsieur ; are you afraid for your sous?"

"Oh no!" said Père Grandet.

"Besides, we shall get along fast enough. Your tenants have picked out their best horses for you."

"Very good ; you didn't tell them where I was going?"

"I didn't know."

"All right ; is the carriage strong?"

"Strong, do you say, master? It would carry three thousand-weight. How much do your casks weigh?"

"I know," said Nanon. "Not far short of eighteen hundred."

"Hold your tongue, Nanon. You will tell my wife I have gone into the country. I shall be back to dinner. Now, go along as fast as you can, Cornoiller; I must be at Angers before nine o'clock."

The vehicle set off. Nanon bolted the outer door, let the dog loose, went to bed with her shoulder quite bruised and sore, and none of the neighbours had the slightest idea of Grandet's departure or of the motive of his journey. The old miser's prudence and caution were complete. No one ever saw a sou in his house, a house which was filled with gold. Having learnt early in the morning by the gossip on the quay that gold had doubled in value in consequence of numerous vessels fitting out at Nantes, and that speculators had arrived at Angers to buy all they could get, the cooper, merely by borrowing horses from his tenants, had put himself in a position to go there and sell the gold he possessed, and to bring back in exchange, in bills of the receiver-general on the public treasury, the necessary sum for his contemplated investment in the funds, after having materially increased its amount.

"My father is going away," said Eugénie, who from the top of the staircase had heard everything that had passed.

Silence again reigned in the house, and the distant rumbling of the vehicle which gradually receded in the distance, no longer resounded through the slumbering streets of Saumur. At this moment Eugénie's heart seemed to hear. long before her ear caught the sound. a

groan which proceeded from her cousin's room. A stream of light, as fine as the edge of a sword, shone through a crack in the door, intersecting horizontally the balustrades of the old staircase.

"He is suffering!" she said, as she ran up the stairs, taking two steps at a time.

A second groan brought her to the landing outside his room. The door was half closed; she pushed it open. Charles was asleep, his head hanging over the side of the old arm-chair. The pen had fallen from his hand, which was almost touching the ground. The hurried and irregular breathing which was the consequence of the young man's position greatly alarmed Eugénie, who at once entered the room.

"He must be very tired," she said, looking at a dozen sealed letters, of which she read the addresses. "To *Monsieur Jean Robert, saddler.*" "To *Monsieur Buisson, tailor,*" &c. "He has most probably arranged all his affairs so as to enable him to quit France soon," she thought. Her glance fell upon two open letters. The words with which one of them commenced, namely, "My dear Annette," made the blood rush to her head. Her heart throbbed, and her feet seemed glued to the floor. "His dear Annette! he loves some one, then, who loves him in return. No more hope. What does he say to her?" These thoughts rushed through her brain and her heart; she could read them everywhere, on the very floor even, in characters of fire. Must she so soon renounce him! "No, I will not read the letter! I must go away! And yet if I were to read it!" She gazed upon him tenderly, and softly raised his head, which

Charles suffered her to do with the docility of a child who, even in its slumbers, seems to recognize its mother, and receives, without awaking, her warm kisses and fostering care. Like a mother, too, Eugénie lifted up his hand which was hanging over his chair, and, like a mother, pressed a gentle kiss upon his hair.

"*Dear Annette !*" It was as if a fiend whispered these two words in her ears.

"I know that I am perhaps not doing right ; but I must read the letter," she said.

Her high-minded and upright principles seemed to reproach her. Eugénie turned her head aside. For the first time in her life her good and evil genius stood face to face within her heart. Never until that moment had she had to blush at any action of her life. Love and curiosity overcome her resolution. At every phrase she read, her heart throbbed more and more heavily, and the keen desire which filled her whole being during her perusal of the letter, rendered the pleasures of a first affection more exquisite than ever.

"MY DEAR ANNETTE,—

"Nothing could ever separate us were it not the misfortune which now overwhelms me, and which no human prudence could have foreseen. My father has died by his own hand ; and his, as well as my own fortune, are irretrievably lost. I am orphaned at an age when from the nature of my education I may almost be regarded as a child ; and yet I must rise a man from the abyss into which I have been precipitated. I have just employed a portion of the night in making my calculations. If my

wish be to leave France as an honest man (of which there can be no doubt), I shall not have a hundred francs of my own to enable me to go and try my fortune in India or America. Yes, my poor Annette, I shall seek my fortune in climes the most destructive to human life ; for, beneath those sultry skies, fortune is swift and certain, I am told. To remain at Paris would be impossible. Neither my heart nor my face are framed to bear the affronts, the cold indifference, the disdain which await the ruined man, the son of the bankrupt merchant. Great Heavens ! to owe two millions ! In the first week of my arrival there I should have lost my life in a duel ; and for that reason I will not return. Thy affection, the tenderest and most devoted that ever ennobled a man's heart, would be powerless to draw me thither. Alas ! dearest and best beloved, I have not even money sufficient to betake myself where thou art, to press one last kiss upon thy lips, nor to receive in return a kiss which I shall need to nerve me with the necessary courage for my undertaking."

"Poor Charles !" said Eugénie, wiping her tears, "I have done well in reading it. I have gold of my own, and he shall have it."

She continued :—

"I had never hitherto given a thought to the wretchedness which attends poverty. Supposing I possessed the hundred louis which are indispensable for the passage, I should not have a sou wherewith to procure a stock of goods for my first adventure. But no, neither a hundred louis, nor one louis even, will be mine ; I shall not know what money I shall have at my command until after

the settlement of my debts at Paris. If nothing should be left, I shall proceed quietly to Nantes, where I shall engage myself as a common sailor, and shall commence life out yonder in the same way as other men of energy have done, who, young, and possessing not a sou of their own, have, nevertheless, returned from India crowned with wealth. During the whole of this day, I have coldly and calmly looked at my future position. For me it is more horrible than for any other. Spoilt by a mother who adored me, cherished by the best of fathers, and blessed, too, at my introduction into the world with your affection, dearest Annette, I have known only the flowers of life ! Such happiness could not continue. And yet, dear Annette, I have more courage than is usually allotted to so careless and listless a being as myself, especially to one accustomed, as I have been, to the fascinations of the most charming woman in Paris, cradled, as I have been, in domestic peace and happiness, on whom home always smiled, and whose simplest wishes were the veriest laws for a father—— oh ! my father ! Annette, he is dead ! Well ! well ! I have reflected on my own position, reflected on yours also. I seem to have lived years during the last four-and-twenty hours. Dear Annette ! if, in order to keep me near you in Paris, you were to sacrifice all the enjoyments which your luxurious tastes, your love of dress, your box at the opera, require, we should even then fail to attain the amount requisite to cover the necessary expenses of the careless life I lead ; and, then, too, I could never accept so many sacrifices. We, therefore, must now separate from each other for ever.”

“ He leaves her, Holy Virgin ! Oh ! joy ! ”

Eugénie clasped her hands together with delight. Charles moved restlessly in his chair, and she grew sick from terror ; but, fortunately, he did not awake. She resumed :—

“ When shall I return ? I know not. The climate of India speedily ages an European, and particularly an European who labours for his livelihood. What will be our position ten years hence ? In ten years your daughter will be eighteen years of age ; she will be your companion, your spy. For you, the world will be pitilessly cruel ; your daughter will perhaps be still more so. We have witnessed examples of these worldly judgments, and of the ingratitude which young girls display. Should not this be a lesson for us ! Retain, in the depths of your heart, as I myself will retain it, the recollection of those four years of happiness, and be faithful, if you can, to your poor friend. And yet I cannot require this ; because, you know, dear Annette, that I must conform myself to my position, must look at life in a dull, prosaic manner, and rate it at its real value. And then, I must think of marrying, inasmuch as this will become one of the necessities of my new position ; and I cannot but acknowledge that I have found here, at Saumur, in my uncle’s house, a cousin whose manners, face, mind, and heart, would please you, and who, moreover, seems to me to have ——”

There the letter stopped.

“ He must have been very wearied to have ceased writing to her,” thought Eugénie.

She justified him ! Was it not possible, then, for this innocent girl to perceive the cold indifference which the

letter betrayed? To all young girls religiously brought up, ignorant and pure in mind, everything is love as soon as they place their foot within the enchanted regions of love. They walk there enveloped with that celestial light which their minds emit, and which surrounds their lover with its rays; they invest him with the purity of their own feelings, and clothe him with the brightness of their own thoughts. A woman's errors almost invariably proceed from her belief in that which is good, or from her faith in that which is true. For Eugénie the words, "*My dear Annette, dearest and best beloved,*" found an echo in her heart, sounded like the sweetest accents of love, floated caressingly through her mind, as in her childhood, the divine notes of the *Venite adoremus*, awakened by the organ, pleased and caressed her ear. Besides, the tears with which Charles's eyes were still full for his father's loss to her mind indicated a generous and noble disposition, by which young girls' hearts are won. Could she know that if Charles so tenderly regarded his father and so sincerely mourned his death, that affection arose less from the goodness of his own heart than from his father's kindness towards him? Monsieur and Madame Guillaume Grandet, by invariably gratifying their son's capricious fancies, by conferring on him all the enjoyments that fortune can bestow, had prevented him from forming in his mind all the horrible calculations of which, at Paris, the greater number of children are more or less guilty, when, surrounded by those Parisian incentives to luxurious enjoyment, they form desires and conceive plans, which, to their regret, they observe are indefinitely postponed and retarded by the continuance of their

parents' lives. His father's generous prodigality, then, had been the means of sowing in his heart a sincere filial affection, free from all calculation. Nevertheless, Charles was a true child of Paris, trained and accustomed, by the mode of life at Paris, by Annette herself, to calculate everything—already, indeed, an old man by experience under the mask of a young man. He had received that horrible education which this world bestows—where, in one single evening, a man commits, in thought and in words, more crimes than justice punishes at the Court of Assizes; where a jest or a sneer annihilates the grandest conceptions; where one's only title to consideration is based on one's clear perception of things; and to see clearly according to the world's notions, is to believe in nothing, neither in feelings, nor in men, nor even in events; for false events, too, based on fraud and treachery, are constructed there. There, in order to see clearly, one must daily sound the depths of a friend's purse, must know how to place one's-self, politically speaking, above every circumstance that may happen in life; to admire nothing as it were, whether works of art, or noble actions, and to assign, as a motive power for everything *personal interest* alone. After he had been guilty of a thousand acts of folly, this great lady, the beautiful Annette, had compelled Charles to think seriously. She talked to him of his future position, passing her perfumed hand through his hair as she spoke; and while she arranged one of his curls, made him analyze the importance of life; in a word, made him effeminate and worldly-minded, a two-fold corruption, but a graceful and refined corruption, and one, too, in excellent taste.

"You are very silly, Charles," she said to him; "I shall have no little trouble, I see, to teach you to know the world. You acted *very badly* towards M. de G rente. I am perfectly aware that he is a man whose character does not stand high; but wait until he no longer possesses power or influence, and you can then despise him as much as you please. Do you know what Madame Campan told us — 'So long, my children, as a man has any political power, bend your knee to him; but as soon as he falls, help to drag him down still lower.' Powerful, he is a kind of deity; overthrown, he is lower than was Marat in his meanest state, because he lives, and Marat is dead. Life is a long course of combinations, which require to be studied and followed closely, in order to succeed in maintaining one's-self constantly in a good position."

Charles was too much a man of the world. His happiness had been too constantly studied by his parents, and he had been too flattered by society to be actuated by any high or noble feelings. The single grain of gold which his mother had cast in his heart, had been passed through the Parisian draw-plate, and elongated to extreme tenuity; he had used it superficially, and must have worn it out by friction.

But Charles was as yet only one-and-twenty years of age, an age when the freshness of life seems inseparable from the candour and purity of the soul; when the voice, the look, the countenance seem in harmony with the feelings. And on this account, the sternest judge, the most sceptical lawyer, the most extortionate usurer, invariably hesitate to believe in the decay of the human heart and the corruption of calculated motives, so long as

the eyes are still bright and lustrous, and the face is still free from line or wrinkle. Charles had never had an opportunity of applying the maxims of Parisian morals which he had learnt by heart, and his inexperience was still great ; but unknown to himself, he had become inoculated with egotism and selfishness of feeling. The germs of this political economy advocated by Parisian society which were latent in his heart, would not be long before they blossomed into being, as soon as he changed from an idle spectator to an actor in the drama of real life.

Almost all young girls, without exception, yield themselves captive to the sweet influence of exterior appearances ; but how could Eugénie, even had she been as prudent and observing as certain young girls in the provinces are reputed to be, have suspected her cousin, when his manners, words and actions were still in such perfect unison with the impulses of the heart ? But by a mere chance, fatal for her happiness, the last effusions of true sensibility which existed in that young heart were already completely effaced.

Accordingly she left the letter she had just read, which in her eyes seemed full of love, and gazed long and fixedly upon her slumbering cousin ; to her fancy the bright illusions of life still animated his features, and she vowed within herself to love him always.

She then cast her eyes upon another letter, without attaching much importance to the indiscretion she was committing ; and if she began to read it, her only motive was to acquire fresh proofs of those high and noble qualities which, in common with all women, she attributed to him whom she had chosen for her lover.

“ MY DEAR ALPHONSE,—

“ At the very moment you read this letter, I shall have ceased to possess a single friend ; but I do not conceal from you, that, in mistrusting those men of the world who use that word so prodigally, I have not doubted your friendship for a moment. I trust to you to settle my affairs for me, and rely upon your realizing as much as you possibly can from everything I possess. By this time you know my position ; I am a beggar, and my wish is to leave France for India. I have just written to all those to whom I believe I am indebted, and you will find accompanying this letter as exact a list of my debts as I have been able to make out from memory. My books, furniture, horses, carriages, &c., will, I think, be sufficient to pay what I owe. I only wish to retain a few trifling articles, which will enable me to have something in the world to start with. I will send you, my dear Alphonse, a regular power of attorney for this sale, in case any dispute should arise. You will forward all my arms to me, but will keep Breton for yourself. No one would be willing to give the price which that invaluable animal is worth ; and I prefer offering it to you, like the ring which is usually bequeathed by a dying man to his testamentary executor. Robert has built a very comfortable travelling carriage for me, but has not delivered it ; induce him to keep it, without asking for any compensation. If he should refuse to accede to this arrangement, avoid everything which could in any way affect my honour in my present circumstances. I owe six louis, lost at play ; do not fail to pay them to ——”

The letter was not finished.

"Dear cousin," said Eugénie, leaving the letter, and hurrying back softly to her room with one of the lighted candles. When she arrived there, it was with no small feeling of delight that she opened the drawer of a piece of old oak furniture, a most beautiful specimen of workmanship of the *Renaissance* period, whereon was still visible, though partially effaced, the famous royal salamander. She took out a large red velvet purse with gold tassels, and bound with a faded stiff ribbon, which had belonged to her grandmother; then, with mingled feelings of pride and delight, she weighed the contents of her purse, and took a pleasure in verifying the forgotten amount of her little stock of money. In the first place she picked out twenty Portuguese pieces, which still looked bright and new, coined during the reign of John V., in the year 1725, in reality worth, at a money-changer's, five *lisbomines*, or each coin worth, as her father told her, 168 francs 64 centimes, the conventional value of each being, however, 180 francs, on account of the rarity and beauty of the pieces in question, which were as dazzling as the sun. *Item*, five *génovines*, or 100-franc pieces of Genoa, a rare coin, which would fetch, at a money-changer's, 87 francs, but for which collectors would give 100 francs; she had inherited them from the late Monsieur la Bertellière. *Item*, three gold Spanish *quadruples* of Philip the Fifth, coined in 1729, given to her by Madame Gentillet, who, on the presentation of each piece, always repeated the same phrase "That dear little creature, that little yellow fellow, is worth 98 francs. Take great care of it, my dear child,

for it will be the flower of your treasure." *Item*, that which her father esteemed most of all (the gold of these pieces was 23 carats and a fraction), one hundred Dutch *ducats*, struck in the year 1756, and worth nearly twelve francs each. *Item*, a great curiosity, a peculiar kind of coin, precious to all misers, namely, three *rupees* with the sign of the balance, and five *rupees* with the sign of the virgin, all pure gold, of twenty-four carats weight, the sublime money of the Great Mogul, each piece of the value of 37 francs 40 centimes, according to weight, but worth at least 50 francs for connoisseurs who love to finger gold. *Item*, the *napoléon*, of 40 francs, received the previous evening, and which she had carelessly placed in her red purse.

The treasure we have described consisted of new and virgin pieces, real works of art, which Grandet occasionally inquired after, and wished to look over, for the purpose of detailing their intrinsic virtues to his daughter; for instance, the beauty of the milled edge, the distinctness of the moulding, or the clearness of the letters, whose sharp outlines were not yet effaced. On none of these rare beauties, however, did she bestow a thought, any more than upon her father's passion for gold, or even upon the danger she ran in depriving herself of a treasure which her father cherished dearly; no, she thought of nothing but of her cousin; and, after a few faults in her calculations, she at last comprehended that she possessed about five thousand eight hundred francs in actual value, which, conventionally speaking, might be sold for nearly two thousand crowns.

At the sight of this wealth she clapped her hands

joyously together, as a child would do who is obliged to get rid of an excess of joy in the liveliest movements of the body. And so the father and the daughter had both reckoned up their fortune; he, for the purpose of forthwith selling his gold; Eugénie, to throw hers into an ocean of affection. She restored the pieces of money into the old purse, took it up in her hand, and again returned to her cousin's room without a moment's hesitation. His secret misery made her forget the hour of the night, and her own sense of maidenly propriety; besides, she felt strong in the consciousness of her own rectitude of purpose, in her devotion, and in her happiness.

At the very moment she appeared on the threshold of the door, holding the candle in one hand and the purse in the other, Charles awoke, saw his cousin standing before him, and remained stupefied with surprise. Eugénie advanced, placed the candle on the table, and said, in a trembling voice, "I have to ask you to forgive me, cousin, for a very serious fault I have been guilty of, but God will forgive the sin I have committed, if you will forget it."

"What is it?" said Charles, rubbing his eyes.

"I have read those two letters."

Charles coloured violently.

"How it happened," she continued, "or why I should have come up here, I really do not now remember. But I am almost tempted to feel but little regret for having read those letters, since they have acquainted me with your heart, and mind, and——"

"And what?" inquired Charles.

And your projects, as well as the great need you are in of a sum of money——”

“ My dear cousin——”

“ Hush, hush, not so loud ; do not let us awaken any one. Here,” she said, opening the purse, “ are the savings of a poor girl who is in want of nothing ; accept them, Charles. This morning I knew not what money was ; you have taught me its value ; it is a means to an end, and nothing more. A cousin is almost a brother ; you can safely, therefore, borrow a sister’s purse.”

Charles was silent. Eugénie, woman as well as young girl, had not foreseen a refusal. “ Well ? ” she said.

He hung down his head.

“ Will you refuse me ? ” she asked, and the throbbings of her heart might have been distinctly heard amidst the deep silence that prevailed. Her cousin’s hesitation humiliated her. The dire necessity of his position represented itself in the liveliest colours to her imagination ; and she attempted to kneel down before him.

“ I will not rise,” she said, “ until you have accepted this gold. For pity’s sake answer me ! If you are generous, tell me whether you honour me——”

Charles, when he heard her cry of noble despair, could not prevent the tears which rushed to his eyes from falling upon his cousin’s hands, which he had seized in order to prevent her kneeling, and Eugénie, as she felt his hot tears showering on her hands, sprung towards the purse, and poured out its contents upon the table.

“ Well ! you mean yes, do you not ? ” she said, weeping from joy. “ Fear not, cousin Charles, you will be rich ; this gold will bring you luck, and some day hence you

will return it to me. Nay, more, we will go into partnership together ; or, at all events, I will submit to any conditions you may choose to impose. But you ought not to place so much value upon this gift."

At last Charles was able to express his feelings.

" Yes, Eugénie, I should indeed be little-minded if I were not to accept your offer. However, nothing for nothing, confidence for confidence."

" What do you want ? " she said, alarmed.

" Listen, my dear cousin, I have there"—and he paused to point out a square box standing on the chest of drawers, covered with a leathern case.

" There is something there, Eugénie, which is as dear to me as my own life; that box was a present from my mother. During the whole of the day I have been thinking that if it were possible for her to return to this earth, she would herself sell the gold which her affection for me so lavishly bestowed upon that dressing-case ; but if I were to do so, such an action would seem like an act of sacrilege on my part "

Eugénie pressed her cousin's hand convulsively as she heard these words.

" No," he resumed, after a momentary pause, while they exchanged a tender look ; " no, I do not wish either to destroy it, or to risk losing it in my travels. Dear Eugénie, you shall be the depositary of it. Never did one friend confide to another anything more hallowed in its nature than that is ; but you shall judge for yourself." He went to the box, took off the cover, opened it, and, with a sad and melancholy air, showed to his cousin, who was lost in admiration at its beauty, a

dressings-case, the workmanship of which added to the gold a value far beyond that of its mere weight.

"What you are now admiring is nothing," he said, touching a spring which revealed a double drawer. "There is nothing in the whole world I value more than this ;" and he drew out two portraits, two *chefs-d'œuvre* of Madame de Michel, profusely set round with pearls.

"Oh, what a beautiful face ! is she the lady you were writ——"

"No," he replied, smiling. "This lady is my mother, and this is my father, your own aunt and uncle. Eugénie, I would implore you on my knees to keep this treasure for me. The gold will compensate you, if I perish and lose your little fortune ; and to you alone can I bequeath these two portraits, for you are worthy of them ! But be sure you destroy them, so that after you they may not fall into other hands." Eugénie remained silent. "Well ! you mean yes, do you not ?" he added.

When she heard the very words which she, but a few moments before, had herself addressed to her cousin, she bent upon him her first look of a loving woman, one of those looks which reveal as much coquetry as depth and sincerity. He took hold of her hand and kissed it.

"Angel of purity, money shall never be regarded as anything between us, shall it ? Affection, which alone confers a value on it, shall henceforth be all in all for us both."

"You are very like your mother," she said. "Was her voice as soft and sweet as yours ?"

"Oh ! far sweeter——"

"Yes, for you," she said, casting down her eyes.

"Come, Charles, you must now go to bed ; I insist upon it, you are tired. Good-bye until to-morrow."

She softly disengaged her hand from her cousin, who held it between his own, and who then lighted her downstairs to her own room. When they had both reached the threshold of the door, he said. "Oh, why am I a ruined man ?"

"Bah ! my father is rich, I believe," she replied.

"Poor girl !" returned Charles, advancing one foot inside the room, and leaning his back against the wall, "were he so, indeed, he would not have suffered mine to die ; he would not leave you in this wretched state, and he would live in a very different manner "

"But Froidfond belongs to him."

"And what is Froidfond worth ?"

"I don't know ; he has Noyers too."

"A wretched farm, perhaps."

"He has vineyards and meadows——"

"Mere nothings," said Charles, disdainfully. "If your father had only twenty-four thousand francs a year, do you suppose you would sleep in this cold and bare-looking room ?" he added, advancing one step further into her apartment.

"Is that where my treasures will be kept ?" he said, pointing at an old chest in the room.

"Go to bed," she said, preventing him entering her room, which was somewhat in disorder.

Charles withdrew, and, with a mutual smile, they both bid each other good-night. They fell off to sleep, lapped in the same dream, and from that moment Charles began to bear his recent loss with more submission.

The next morning, Madame Grandet observed her daughter walking about before breakfast with her cousin, who was still as sad and dejected as was natural to expect in one who had sunk down to the lowest depths of misfortune, and who, while measuring the depth of the abyss into which he had been plunged, had realized the whole weight and burden of his future life.

"My father will not be back until dinner-time," said Eugénie, seeing uneasiness depicted on her mother's face.

It was not difficult to perceive from Eugénie's manners, from her face, and from the peculiar sweetness of her voice, the strict conformity of thought between her cousin and herself. Their hearts and minds were lovingly blended in holy union, before, perhaps, they were even themselves really aware of the strength of the feelings which bound them to each other. Charles remained quietly in the *salle*, where his melancholy was respected. Each of his three female companions was occupied. Grandet having forgotten to leave directions respecting the various matters he had in hand, a great number of persons accordingly came to see him, among others the slater, the plumber, the mason, the carpenter, the hedger and ditcher, and several of his tenants, some to settle agreements relative to certain repairs, others to pay their rents or to receive their money. Madame Grandet and Eugénie were accordingly obliged to be constantly moving to and fro, answering the interminable remarks of the workmen and country people. Nanon locked up the provisions that had been brought by the tenantry, for she always waited for her master to decide what was to be kept for the consumption of the house, or

sold in the market. Grandet, like a good many country gentlemen, was in the habit of drinking his own indifferent wine, and of eating his own damaged fruit.

Towards five o'clock in the evening, Grandet returned from Angers, having disposed of fourteen thousand francs in gold, and having in his pocket-book treasury bills and bonds which would bear interest until he invested them in a purchase in the funds. He had left Cornoiller at Angers to take care of the horses, which were almost knocked up, and to bring them slowly back after they had had a good rest.

"I have just come back from Angers, wife," he said, "and I am hungry."

Nanon called out to him from the kitchen. "Have you had nothing to eat since yesterday?"

"Nothing," replied the *bonhomme*.

Nanon brought in the soup. De Grassins called to receive his client's directions, while the family were at table. Père Grandet had not even seen his nephew.

"Don't hurry yourself, Grandet," said the banker. "We can talk as we are. Do you know what gold is worth at Angers, where people are buying it up to send to Nantes? I am going to send some there."

"Don't send any," replied the cooper, "there is quite enough already. We are on such good terms that I ought to prevent you incurring a loss."

"But gold is worth thirteen francs and fifty centimes."

"Say rather *was* worth."

"Where the devil could they have got any from, then?"

"I went to Angers last night," replied Grandet, in a low tone.

The banker started with surprise. A conversation then ensued between them with their faces close together, during which De Grassins and Grandet looked at Charles very frequently; and, most probably at the moment when the cooper told the banker to invest a sum which would produce an income of a hundred thousand francs a year, De Grassins could not prevent a gesture of astonishment from again escaping him.

"Monsieur Grandet," he said to Charles, "I am going to leave for Paris; if you have any commissions to give me——"

"None, monsieur, I thank you," replied Charles.

"Thank him better than that, nephew, for Monsieur de Grassins is going for the purpose of arranging the affairs of the house of Guillaume Grandet."

"Is there any hope then?" Charles inquired.

"Why," exclaimed the cooper with an admirable assumption of pride, "are you not my nephew? Your honour is our honour. Is not your name Grandet, too?"

Charles rose, caught hold of his uncle, and embraced him, turned very pale, and left the room. Eugénie looked at her father with a gaze full of admiration.

"Come, come, you must say good-bye, friend De Grassins, it's time for you to be off. Gammon those fellows for me right well."

The two diplomatists exchanged a shake of the hands, and the cooper conducted the banker to the door; after having closed it, he returned to the *salle*, and said to Nanon, as he threw himself into his arm-chair, "Give me some cordial."

But, too excited to remain in one place, he got up,

looked at the portrait of Monsieur de la Bertellière, and began to sing, beating time to the air he sung,—

“ Dans les gardes françaises
J'avais un bon papa.”

Nanon, Madame Grandet, and Eugénie, looked at each other in mute astonishment. Any exhibition of delight on the vine-grower's part always alarmed them. The evening did not last long. In the first place, Grandet himself wished to go to bed early, and when he went to bed, every one in the house was obliged to sleep too, on the principle that when Augustus drank, Poland got drunk. In the next place, Nanon, Charles, and Eugénie, were not less fatigued than the master of the house. And as for Madame Grandet, she slept, ate, drank, and walked, in blind obedience to her husband's wishes. However, during the two hours allowed for digestion, the cooper, more facetious than he had ever been known to be, pronounced many of those peculiar apothegms, one of which will be sufficient as an example. When he had drunk the cordial he looked at the glass.

“ No sooner does one put one's lips to a glass than it is empty ! This is our own history. One cannot be and have been. You cannot spend your money and keep it in your purse ; otherwise, life would be too enjoyable.”

He was both jovial and indulgent ; for when Nanon came with her spinning-wheel, he said to her,—

“ You must be tired, Nanon ; leave your spinning alone this evening.”

“ Oh ! yes, indeed ! I shouldn't know what to do with myself if I did,” she replied.

“Poor Nanon! Would you like a glass of cordial?”

“Ah! I don’t say no to that; madame makes it much better than the apothecaries; for it’s regular doctors’ stuff what they sell.”

“They put too much sugar in; and it then loses all its flavour,” said her master.

The next morning, the family having met at eight o’clock for breakfast, presented a picture of the closest domestic intimacy. Misfortune had very speedily established a strong feeling of sympathy between Madame Grandet, Eugénie, and Charles. Even Nanon’s feelings of compassion were aroused without knowing why, and all four of them began to form one and the same family as it were, together. As for the old vine-grower, his avarice being now gratified, the certainty of soon seeing his dandified nephew take his departure without having to pay him anything beyond the expenses of his journey to Nantes, rendered him almost indifferent to his presence in the house. He left the two children, as he called Eugénie and Charles, free to act as they pleased, under Madame Grandet’s inspection, in whom he had, moreover, the most entire confidence in everything that concerned religious and moral duties. The tracing out of such of his fields and ditches as lined the public highroad, the care which his poplar plantations on the banks of the Loire required, and the winter operations connected with his fields at home, as well as at Froidfond, exclusively occupied his attention.

From that moment the spring-time of love commenced for Eugénie. Since the scene of that memorable night when she had given her hoarded treasure to her cousin,

her heart had followed the treasure. Both accomplices in the same secret, they looked at each other, expressing in their glance a mutual intelligence which fathomed their feelings to the very depths, and rendered them more closely and intimately united, by placing them both, so to express it, beyond the ordinary occurrences and circumstances of actual life. Does not a near relationship warrant a certain gentleness in the tone of the voice, an affection in every look? and so Eugénie took a pleasure in softening the anguish of her cousin's sufferings in all the childlike delights of a dawning fond affection.

Are there not certain sweet and graceful resemblances between the beginning of love and that of life? Are not children lulled to sleep by softly-murmured songs, and kind and gentle looks? Do we not tell them wonderful stories of the dazzling future before them? Does not hope itself in their behoof unceasingly display its radiant wings? Do they not shed their mingled tears of joy and grief, or quarrel for the merest trifles? for pebbles with which they strive to rear an ever-shifting palace—for flowers which are disregarded as soon as plucked? Are they not feverishly anxious to forestall time, to advance with rapid strides in life? Love is our second transformation.

Childhood and love were almost the same with Eugénie and Charles; it was a first affection, with all its child-like accompaniments, which became the more endearing and engaging since they were enveloped with an air of melancholy. The love we have been speaking of, struggling at its birth beneath the symbols and emblems of mourning, was, however, only in still greater harmony with

the provincial simplicity of this ruined and dismantled house. While exchanging a few words with his cousin at the brink of the well, or in the still court-yard—or reclining on the moss-grown bank in the garden, until the hour of sunset drew near, occupied in saying the merest nothings of mighty importance to each other—or musing amidst the profound silence which reigned between the ramparts and the house, as though beneath the vaulted aisles of a church,—Charles realized the sanctity of that love, of which his grand lady, his dear Annette, had acquainted him with merely its stormy episodes. At that moment he forgot the purely Parisian passion, full of coquetry, vanity, and gaudy brilliancy, for a pure, frank, and ingenuous affection.

Besides, three days had hardly passed away, before he really loved the household whose habits and customs he began to understand. He left his bedroom early in the morning in order to find an opportunity of talking with Eugénie a few minutes before Grandet came down to give out the provisions for the day; and no sooner were his uncle's footsteps heard on the staircase, than he hurried away into the garden. The slight impropriety of this early rendezvous, a secret even from Eugénie's mother, which Nanon pretended not to observe, impressed, upon the purest and most innocent affection in the world, the charm and attractiveness of forbidden pleasures. And then, when breakfast was finished, and Grandet had set off to look after his estates, and the farming and other works he had in hand, Charles sat between the mother and daughter, experiencing a pleasure and happiness with which he had hitherto

been unacquainted, as he held their thread while they unwound it from his hands, or sat watching them at work, or listened to them conversing. The simplicity of this almost monastic life, which revealed to him the beauties of those natures to whom the world was unknown, affected him deeply. He had supposed a life and manners such as these impossible in France, and had imagined that they existed only in Germany, even if they were not altogether fabulous, and represented merely in the romances of Auguste Lafontaine. In a short time he regarded Eugénie as the ideal of the Marguerite of Goethe, minus her fault.

In a word, from day to day, his looks, his words, breathed a fresh life into the poor girl, who abandoned herself, with calm delight, to the full springtide of her affection. She grasped the happiness within her reach, as a swimmer seizes hold of the overhanging willow branch to lift himself out of the stream and repose upon its banks.

Did not the bitterness of an approaching separation already sadden the brightest of these fleeting days? And then, too, every day some slight circumstance occurred to recall their early separation vividly before them. For instance, three days after the Des Grassins's departure, Charles was taken by Grandet to the Tribunal of the First Instance, with a solemnity which country people invariably attach to such acts, to sign before that court a renunciation of the administration to his father's estate. A terrible repudiation, a kind of domestic apostacy. Then, again, he went to Maître Cruchot to execute two powers of attorney; the one for De

Grassins, the other for the friend whom he had authorized to dispose of his personal effects. Further, he had to fulfil all the necessary formalities required for the purpose of obtaining a passport for foreign countries; and lastly, when the modest mourning apparel arrived which Charles had had forwarded to him from Paris, he sent for a tailor in the town of Saumur and sold him his now useless wardrobe, an act which pleased Père Grandet immensely.

“ Ah ! now you are like a man who is going to embark, and is determined to make his fortune,” he said, seeing him dressed in a frock-coat of plain black cloth. “ That is as it should be.”

“ I wish you to understand, monsieur,” Charles replied, “ that I am perfectly alive to the sense of my position.”

“ What have you got there ? ” said his uncle, whose eye sparkled at the sight of a handful of gold which Charles showed him.

“ I have made a collection, monsieur, of my buttons and rings, and in fact of all the little superfluities I possess which are likely to be of any value; but knowing no one at Saumur, I was going this morning to beg you to——”

“ To buy that of you ? ” said Grandet, interrupting him.

“ No, uncle, merely to give me the name of some honest person who——”

“ Give it to me, nephew ! I will go upstairs and see what it would be likely to sell for, and then will come back and let you know what it is worth to the very last

farthing. Jewel-gold," he said, examining a long chain, from nineteen to twenty carats weight.

And he held out his large hand and carried off the heap of gold.

"Will you allow me, cousin Eugénie?" said Charles, "to offer you these two buttons. They may be of service for fastening ribbons round your wrists,—a kind of bracelet which is very much in fashion just now."

"I accept them most gladly," she replied, casting a look full of intelligence at him.

"This is my mother's thimble, aunt, which I have kept as a precious relic in my travelling-case," said Charles, presenting a very pretty gold thimble to Madame Grandet, who for ten years past had been longing for one. He pronounced these words with deep emotion.

"It is impossible to thank you, nephew," said the poor old lady, as her eyes filled with tears. "Every night and morning I will add to my prayers that which is most important of all, the prayer for those who are travelling. When I die, Eugénie will keep this precious relic for you."

"It's worth nineteen hundred and eighty-nine francs seventy-five centimes, nephew," said Grandet, opening the door; "but to save you selling them, I will hand you over the money in *livres*."

The words "in *livres*" signify, on the banks of the Loire, that crowns of six *livres* are to be taken for six *francs*, without deduction.

"I hardly dared propose it to you," replied Charles; "but I should have disliked to have disposed of my jewels to a second-hand dealer in the town you live in.

‘People should wash their dirty linen at home,’ Napoleon used to say. I am much obliged to you for your kindness.”

Grandet scratched his ear, and a moment’s silence ensued.

“My dear uncle,” resumed Charles, looking at him timidly, as if he feared to wound his susceptibility, “my cousin and my aunt have been kind enough to accept a feeble remembrance from me; will you, in your turn, accept these sleeve-buttons, which are now quite useless to me? They will remind you of a poor fellow who, far away from you, will assuredly think of those who henceforth will constitute all the family he has in the world.”

“My boy, you mustn’t strip yourself of everything, you know.”

“What have you got, wife?” he said, turning eagerly towards her. “Ah! a gold thimble!”

“And you, girl? oh, oh! diamond clasps!”

“Well! I’ll take your buttons, my boy,” he continued, shaking Charles by the hand; “but—you will allow me to—to pay—your—yes, your voyage to India. Yes, I wish to pay your passage. The more so, my boy, because in valuing your jewels for you, I only valued them for what the gold would fetch, and there may be something to gain by the workmanship. And so, this is what I’ll do: I will give you a thousand crowns in *livres*. Cruchot will lend them to me; I haven’t a liard here, unless Perrottet, who is behindhand with his rent, pays me. Wait a bit; I’ll just go and see.”

He caught up his hat, put on his gloves, and went out.

"You must go away then?" said Eugénie, bending on him a look of sadness mingled with admiration.

"I must," he said, hanging down his head thoughtfully.

For several days past, Charles's bearing, his manners, his words even, had become those of a man as if in profound affliction, but who, feeling the immense weight of obligations upon him, seemed to draw fresh courage from his misfortunes. He ceased to sigh and weep, for he had indeed become a man. And so, Eugénie never formed a better estimate of her cousin's character than when she saw him come downstairs in his suit of coarse black cloth, which harmonized well with his pale features and his dejected countenance. On that day, too, both his aunt and cousin put on mourning, and accompanied Charles to a *Requiem*, which was celebrated at the parish church, for the departed soul of Guillaume Grandet.

During the luncheon, Charles received his letters from Paris, and read them.

"Well, cousin, are you satisfied with your affairs?" said Eugénie in a low tone.

"Never ask questions of that sort, girl," replied Grandet. "What the deuce! I never tell you of mine, why should you thrust your nose into your cousin's affairs? Leave him alone."

"Oh! I have no secrets," said Charles.

"Ta! ta! ta! nephew; you'll soon learn that you must keep your tongue between your teeth in business matters."

When the two lovers were alone in the garden,

Charles said to Eugénie, as he drew her towards the old seat under the walnut-tree, where they sat down together—

“ I was perfectly correct in the opinion I had formed of Alphonse ; he has managed admirably. He has arranged my affairs with prudence and the strictest honour as regards myself. I owe nothing at Paris ; all my effects were well sold ; and he informs me that he had taken the opinion of a captain accustomed to make long voyages, and had invested the three thousand francs which remained over in a small cargo composed of European curiosities, which would be likely to sell exceedingly well in India. He has forwarded my luggage to Nantes, where a vessel is lying ready laden for Java. In five days, Eugénie, we must bid each other farewell ; it may be for ever, and will certainly be for a long time. My little cargo and ten thousand francs are a very small beginning. It is hopeless to think of returning before many years have passed away. Let us not, therefore, my dear cousin, place our happiness at stake, for I may perish, Eugénie, and perhaps a wealthy establishment may offer itself for your acceptance——”

“ Do you love me, Charles ? ” she said.

“ Oh ! indeed, yes ! ”

“ I will wait, then.

“ Heavens ! my father is at his window,” she said, pushing her cousin aside as he approached to kiss her.

She made her escape under the archway leading into the house, where Charles followed her ; as she saw him, she withdrew near to the staircase and opened the folding-door. Then, hardly knowing where she was

going, Eugénie found herself close by the small closet where Nanon slept, in the darkest part of the passage. It was there that Charles, who had followed her, took hold of her hand, drew her to his breast, put his arm round her waist, and folded her in his embrace. Eugénie ceased to offer any resistance; she received and gave in exchange, the purest, sweetest, and most impassioned of kisses.

"Dear Eugénie," said Charles, "a cousin is better than a brother, for he can marry you——"

"Amen!" cried Nanon, opening the door of her den.

The two affrighted lovers ran away into the *salle*, where Eugénie again took up her work, and Charles began to read the litanies in honour of the Virgin out of Madame Grandet's prayer-book.

"Humph!" said Nanon, "we're all saying our prayers now."

From the very moment that Charles announced his departure, Grandet bustled about as if he wished it to be supposed that he took the greatest interest in him. He showed himself very liberal with regard to everything which cost nothing, and busied himself in looking after a packing-case maker for his nephew; but fancying that the man intended to charge too high a price for the packing-cases, nothing would satisfy him but that he must make them himself, and he hunted out some old planks for that purpose. He rose early in the morning in order to plane and work at his deal boards, and to construct out of them some very tolerable cases,

in which he packed up all Charles's effects, and took the trouble to get them transported by boat down the Loire, to see that they were insured, and to get them forwarded in proper time to Nantes. From the moment her cousin had snatched a kiss from her lips in the passage, the hours seemed to Eugénie to flee with alarming rapidity. Sometimes, even, she wished to accompany her cousin. Any one who has realized that most endearing and indissoluble of all human passions, that whose duration is day by day shortened by age, by time, by mortal disease, by some one or other of those many fatalities which attend on our frail human nature, will readily comprehend the torments from which Eugénie suffered. Often and often did she weep bitterly as she walked restlessly to and fro in the garden, which now seemed too close and confined for her to breathe in, as, indeed, she felt the courtyard, the house, the town itself to be, and already in idea did she traverse the vast expanse of ocean whither Charles was bound.

The evening previous to her cousin's departure at last arrived. In the morning, during Grandet and Nanon's absence, the precious casket which contained the two portraits was solemnly installed in the only drawer in the chest which could boast of a lock and key, and where the now empty purse was already deposited. This treasure was not so deposited there, however, until it had received a vast number of tears and kisses. When Eugénie placed the key in her bosom, she was unable to summon up sufficient courage to prevent Charles from kissing its place of deposit.

'It shall never leave there, Charles.'

"Well, dearest, my heart will always be there as well!"

"That is very wrong of you, Charles," she said, in an expostulatory tone.

"Are we not almost married, Eugénie?" he replied. "I have your promise, you have mine."

"Thine for ever!" said each of them over and over again.

Never was there a promise made on this earth purer than the one they had exchanged; for Eugénie's simple candour of soul had momentarily sanctified Charles's love. The next morning the breakfast was sad enough. In spite of the promised golden dressing-gown, and of a cross *à la Jeannette*, with which Charles presented her, Nanon herself, with less restraint than the others in the expression of her feelings, could not refrain from crying.

"The poor dear young gentleman who's going to sea! Heaven be with him, poor fellow!" she said.

At half-past ten, the family started from the house to accompany Charles to the Nantes diligence. Nanon let the dog loose, shut the door, and insisted upon carrying Charles's carpet bag. All the tradesmen in the old street were standing at their shop-doors to see the procession pass, which was joined at the market-place by Maître Cruchot.

"Be sure and not cry, Eugénie," said her mother to her.

"Nephew," said Grandet at the inn door, kissing Charles on both his cheeks, "set off poor, come back rich; you will find your father's honour safe. I promise you that, I, Grandet; all you will have to do is to——"

“ Ah ! uncle, you soften the bitterness of my departure. Is it not the richest present you could make me ? ”

Not understanding the words of the old cooper, whom he had interrupted, Charles shed tears of gratitude upon his uncle's tanned face, while Eugénie pressed with all her strength her cousin's and her father's hands. The notary alone smiled, admiring Grandet's finesse, for he, alone, had understood what the old man intended to convey. The three Grandets and Cruchot stood beside the vehicle until it started ; and when it had disappeared over the bridge and was no longer heard in the distance, the vine-grower said, “ A good riddance.”

Fortunately Maître Cruchot was the only person who heard this exclamation. Eugénie and her mother had gone to a particular part of the quay, from which they could still see the diligence, and waved their white handkerchiefs from the place where they stood, a recognition which Charles responded to by waving his own.

“ Oh ! my mother, would that I did but possess, for one moment even, the power which Heaven enjoys ? ” said Eugénie, when her cousin's handkerchief was no longer visible.

In order to avoid interrupting the course of events which subsequently occurred in the bosom of the Grandet family, we shall be necessarily obliged to cast, by way of anticipation, a glance at the operations which were effected at Paris by Grandet, by the means or through the agency of De Grassins. One month after the banker's departure, Grandet was inscribed in the books of the Bank of France as the owner of a principal sum which represented an income of eighty thousand francs, he

having bought in when the funds were at eighty francs. The particulars which the inventory of his effects afforded at the time of his death never threw the faintest light upon the means which his distrustful nature hit upon for transmitting the requisite sum for effecting the investment in question. Maître Cruchot's idea was, that Nanon, ignorant of the mission with which she was entrusted, had been the faithful instrument by which the necessary transport of funds had been effected. About that period she was absent for four days, under the pretext that she was going to put things to rights at Froidfond, as if it were likely that the *bonhomme* was at all capable of leaving anything undone. With regard, however, to the affairs of the house of Guillaume Grandet, all the cooper's anticipations were realized.

At the Bank of France is to be found, as every one is aware, the most precise information with respect to all the large fortunes of Paris and of the departments. The names of De Grassins and of Felix Grandet of Saumur were well known there, and enjoyed an amount of consideration accorded to all financial celebrities who are backed up by immense landed possessions perfectly unencumbered. The arrival of the banker from Saumur, commissioned, it was stated, to liquidate, from a pure principle of honour, the debts which were owing by the house of Grandet of Paris, was, of course, sufficient to prevent the memory of the deceased from being disgraced by any hostile proceedings against the estate. The seals were taken off in the presence of the creditors, and the family notary began in the usual regular form to make out an inventory of the names of

the persons entitled to the succession. De Grassins immediately called a meeting of the creditors, who unanimously elected the banker of Saumur as liquidator, in conjunction with one of the fraternity at Paris, the head of a wealthy house of business and one of the principal creditors, and entrusted them with all the requisite powers and authorities for the purpose of saving the honour of the family, as well as securing the amounts due to the estate. The high credit which Grandet of Saumur enjoyed, the hope which he diffused in the hearts of the creditors, with whom De Grassins was the channel of communication, facilitated the arrangements, and he did not meet with one unyielding or obstinate individual among the number. Not one of the creditors thought for a moment of transferring the amount due to him to the account of "profit and loss," every one saying to himself, "Grandet of Saumur will be sure to pay." Six months passed on in this way. The Parisians had met the drafts which were in circulation, and kept them carefully in their desks ; this being the first result which the cooper was desirous of attaining. Nine months after the first meeting, the two liquidators distributed twenty-two per cent. to each creditor. This sum was produced from the sale of the goods, chattels, and effects belonging to the late Guillaume Grandet, which had been effected with the most scrupulous exactitude. The strictest probity and impartiality presided at this liquidation, and the creditors delightedly acknowledged the punctilious and highly honourable conduct of the Grandets. When these encomiums had been suitably circulated, the creditors applied for the balance of what was owing to

them, and they thought it incumbent on them to write a collective letter to Grandet on the subject.

“ Here we are ! ” he said, as he threw the letter behind the fire. “ Wait a bit, my fine fellows.”

In answer to the propositions contained in this letter, Grandet of Saumur required that the creditors should deposit in the hands of a notary all the documents or vouchers they might be possessed of in proof of their claims against his brother's estate, and that they should accompany the same by a receipt for the payments which had been already effected, under the pretext of auditing the accounts, and of correctly establishing the exact position of the estate. This deposit was the cause of a thousand difficulties being started. Generally speaking, the creditor is a sort of maniac. To-day, for instance, he is ready to come to terms ; to-morrow he is obstinate and perfectly unreasonable ; by-and-bye he is inconceivably compliant and considerate. To-day, again, his wife is in a good humour, his last little one has cut its teeth, all goes on well at home, and he is not disposed to lose a single sou ; to-morrow it rains, he can't go out, he is in a melancholy frame of mind, he says *yes* to every proposition which is likely to bring an affair to a termination ; the day after, however, he must have security ; and at the end of the month the rascal is determined to drive you to extremities. The creditor is like one of those house-sparrows, on whose tail little children are told to try and put some salt. Grandet had frequently observed the atmospherical variations of creditors in general, and his brother's creditors in particular seemed to act in blind obedience to the calcula-

tions he had formed. Some of them got angry, and refused the deposit point-blank.

"Very good, that's just as it should be," said Grandet, rubbing his hands together as he read the letters which he received from De Grassins on the subject. Some of the other creditors, on the other hand, would only consent to the said deposit on condition that their claims and rights should be properly admitted, that they should not be called upon to give up any claim they might have, and that the right of making a declaration of bankruptcy against the estate should be reserved to them. Whereupon a new correspondence ensued, and subsequently Grandet of Saumur consented to all the reservations which had been insisted upon. In consideration of this concession, the amicably-disposed creditors brought the harder creditors to reason. The deposit took place, but not without a few grumblings. "This fellow Grandet," some of them said to De Grassins, "is laughing at you, and at us too." Three-and-twenty months after Guillaume Grandet's death, many of the merchants, owing to the constant pressure and bustle of business affairs in Paris, had forgotten their claims against Grandet's estate, or if they thought of them, it was only to say to themselves, "I begin to think that the twenty-two per cent. is all I shall get out of it." The cooper had calculated correctly upon the effect of time, which served his purpose well.

At the end of the third year De Grassins wrote to Grandet, stating that, in consideration of ten per cent. upon the two millions four hundred thousand francs remaining due by the house of Grandet, he had induced

the creditors to give up their documents. To this Grandet replied that the notary and stockbroker, whose frightful failures had been the cause of his brother's death, were living, that they had improved in their circumstances, and consequently, that it would be necessary to take legal proceedings in order to obtain something from them, and thus reduce the amount of the deficit. At the end of the fourth year the deficit was well and duly fixed at the sum of two millions. Long parleys thereupon ensued, extending over a period of six months, between the liquidators and the creditors, and between Grandet and the liquidators. And when, at last, he was hard pressed to terminate the affair, Grandet of Saumur informed the two liquidators, towards the ninth month of the same year, that his nephew, having made his fortune in India, and having intimated to him his intention of paying his father's debts in full, he could not take upon himself to discharge them, without having consulted him on the subject, and that he was awaiting his nephew's answer. The creditors, towards the middle of the fifth year, were still held in check by the words "payment in full," which the cunning cooper suffered to escape him from time to time, laughing in his sleeve all the while, and never making use of the phrase, "Those Parisians," without a cunning smile accompanied by an oath.

But the creditors were reserved for a fate unexampled within the annals of commerce. We shall meet with them again by-and-bye in the very same position in which Grandet had kept them lingering, when they will be required, by the exigencies of this story, to make their reappearance once more. When the funds were at 109,

Grandet sold out, withdrew from Paris about two millions of francs in gold, and added them to the six hundred thousand francs he had hoarded in small casks in his house, which was the amount of the compound interest arising from his investments. De Grassins had become a permanent resident at Paris, and for these reasons: in the first place, he had been nominated a deputy; and, in the second, he had taken a great fancy—he the father of a family, but wearied to death by the monotony of a provincial life—to one of the prettiest actresses at one of the theatres, and thereupon immediately ensued a rejuvenescence of the former quartermaster in the banker. It is unnecessary to speak of his conduct; it was pronounced at Saumur to be profoundly immoral. His wife was delighted at the idea of a separate maintenance, and thought she possessed sufficient ability to conduct the banking-house at Saumur, the business of which was carried on in her own name, in order to repair the breaches made in her fortune by Monsieur De Grassins' various acts of folly. The Cruchots so successfully did their utmost to render the false position of the quasi-widow still more so, that she only succeeded in securing a very indifferent marriage for her daughter, and was obliged to renounce all ideas of forming an alliance with Eugénie Grandet as out of the question. Adolphe joined his father at Paris, and it was said pursued a very wild and reckless course of conduct when there. The Cruchots were triumphant.

“Your husband seems to be utterly wanting in common sense,” said Grandet, when he lent Madame de Grassins a sum of money, for which, however, he took care he was

properly secured. "I am very sorry for you; you're a good little woman."

"Ah, monsieur!" replied the poor lady, "who would think that the day he left your house to go to Paris he was running to his ruin?"

"Heaven is my witness, madame, that, up to the very last moment, I did my utmost to prevent him going there. The President Cruchot was more than anxious to go instead of him; but if your husband was so very desirous of going, we now know the reason why."

In this manner Grandet cleared himself from all obligation to De Grassins.

In every situation of life occasions for grief more frequently arise for women than for men, and their sufferings are greater than those of the latter. Man possesses his strength of mind and force of purpose, and exercises the power and influence they confer; he can act as he pleases, go where he will, occupy himself as to him seemeth best; thought is his, the future within his reach, and all the consolations therein comprised. This was Charles's position. But the woman is left behind; she remains face to face with that grief from which nothing can distract her attention; descends to the very bottom of the abyss which her wretchedness has created, sounds its depth, and often fills it with her prayers and tears, as was, indeed, poor Eugénie's case. She was becoming early initiated with her destiny. To feel, to love, to suffer, to live for self-devotion, will ever be the spirit which governs a woman's life. Eugénie realized her woman's life in all these respects, without the consolation which

cheers it. Her happiness, the sum of which was derived from these sources, like nails sown upon the wall, to adopt Bossuet's expression, would not one day be sufficient to fill the hollow of her hand. Troubles are never long in arriving, and for her they were soon close at hand.

The day after Charles's departure, Grandet's house resumed its ordinary aspect, for every one except Eugénie, for whom it seemed suddenly to have become untenanted. Without her father's knowledge, she begged Charles's room might remain in the same state he had left it. Her mother and Nanon were very willing accomplices.

"Who knows whether he may not return earlier than we think?" she said.

"Ah! I should like to see him here," said Nanon. "I was getting used to him! He was a very nice, excellent young fellow,—good-looking, too, and as soft and gentle as a young girl."

Eugénie looked at Nanon.

"Holy Virgin, mademoiselle, your eyes are enough to turn any one's head; don't look at people in that way."

From that day Mademoiselle Grandet's beauty assumed a different character. The serious thoughts with which love had filled her whole being, and the pride and dignity of a woman who is beloved, lent to her features that kind of brilliancy which painters represent by a halo of glory. Previous to her cousin's arrival, Eugénie might have been compared to the Virgin before the conception; but when he had gone, she resembled the Virgin Mother: she had conceived love.

These two Marys, so differently and so admirably

represented by certain Italian painters, constitute one of the most beautiful typical figures with which Christianity abounds. On her way home from attending mass, where she had gone the day after Charles's departure, and where, indeed, she had made a vow to attend every day, she purchased, at the library in the town, a map of the world, which she nailed against the wall, close to her looking-glass, so as to be able to follow her cousin in his voyage to India, and thus, every morning and evening to transport herself within the vessel which bore him onward on his course, to see him, to address a thousand questions to him, to say to him,—“Are you well? are you suffering? are you thinking of me as you gaze upon the clouds with whose beauties and use to our loving hearts you made me so well acquainted?”

Then, again, in the morning, she remained plunged in thought, seated beneath the walnut-tree, on the worm-eaten and moss-grown wooden bench, where they had repeated such an infinity of admirable sayings to each other, or had talked such delightful nonsense—where they had built so many castles in the air as they conversed of their future quiet little household. Her mind dwelt on the future as she gazed upon the heavens through the little space which the walls enabled her vision to embrace—then upon the worn and crumbling walls, and the roof under which Charles's bedroom was situated. In a word, it was that isolated, solitary love, that true affection which knows neither check nor control, which insinuates itself into every thought, and becomes the substance, or, as our fathers would have said, the stuff or material of our life. Whenever her father's self-styled

friends came to make up the usual evening game at cards, she was gay and cheerful, and concealed her feelings from remark ; but during the whole morning long, she talked about Charles with her mother and Nanon. Nanon had discovered that she could sympathize with her young mistress's sufferings without failing in her duty towards her old master, and she said to her :—

“ If I had had a sweetheart, I'd have—followed him to the end of the world ; I'd have put an end to myself for him ; but nothing of the kind is likely. I shall die without ever having known what life is like. Would you believe, mademoiselle, that old Cornoiller, a good sort of fellow in his way, comes and pays his court to me on account of my savings, just like those who come here sniffing after master's hoards while making up to you ? I can see that plain enough, for although I'm as big and fat as a tower, yet I'm not quite blind. Well, ma'mselle, would you believe it, but I can't say I don't like it, although it isn't the same as being in love ? ”

Two months passed away in this manner. This domestic existence, formerly so dull and monotonous, was now enlivened by the immense interest of the secret which united these three women so closely together. For them, beneath the dingy ceiling of that *salle*, Charles was still there, still moving about as before. Every morning and evening Eugénie opened the dressing-case to look at the portrait of her aunt. One Sunday morning, her mother surprised her at the moment she was endeavouring to trace a resemblance to Charles in the features of the portrait. Madame Grandet was immediately initiated in the terrible secret of the

exchange which the traveller had made with Eugénie for her treasure.

“ You have given him all ! ” said the mother, aghast with fear. “ What will you say to your father on New Year’s Day, when he asks to see your money ? ”

Eugénie’s eyes became fixed with terror, and both mother and daughter remained in a state of mortal dread during half the morning. Their minds were so disturbed that they missed attending the grand mass, and were only able to be present at the military mass. In three days’ time the year 1819 would close. In three days would be the commencement of a tragedy of everyday life in which neither poison nor dagger would be used, nor blood shed ; but, as far as regards the actors concerned, a tragedy more truly appalling than the dramas which took place in the immortal family of the Atrides.

“ What will become of us ? ” said Madame Grandet to her daughter, letting her knitting fall upon her knees.

The poor mother had, during the last two months, been subjected to so many troubles and anxieties that the worsted sleeves which she required for winter wearing were not yet finished. This domestic incident, so trifling in appearance, involved very serious consequences for her ; for, as she had no sleeves to cover her arms, the cold attacked her constitution in a very violent manner in the midst of a crisis brought on by her husband’s fearful anger.

“ I was thinking, my poor child, that if you had confided your secret to me, we should have had time to write to Paris, to M. de Grassins ; he might possibly have been

able to have sent us some coins like yours ; and, although Grandet knows them so well, still, perhaps——”

“ But where could we have got such a sum of money ? ”

“ I would have pawned some of my own things. Besides, M. de Grassins might have——”

“ There is no time now,” replied Eugénie, in a hoarse, altered tone of voice, interrupting her mother. “ Shall we not have to go into his bedroom to-morrow morning to wish him a happy new year ? ”

“ But why should I not go and see the Cruchots, my child ? ”

“ No, no, it would be delivering me up to them entirely, and putting ourselves into their power. Besides, I have made up my mind. I was right in doing as I did, and do not repent of anything I have done. Heaven will protect me. Let His holy will be done ! Ah ! if you had read his letter as I did, mother, you would have had no thought but for him.”

The next morning, the first of January 1820, the excessive terror under which the mother and daughter were suffering made them think of the most natural excuse possible to evade making their formal and solemn entry into Grandet’s room. The winter of 1819 to 1820 was one of the severest of the period. The roofs were covered thickly with the snow. Madame Grandet said to her husband, as soon as she heard him moving about in his room,—

“ Grandet, will you desire Nanon to light a little fire in my room, the cold is so severe that I am shivering under the counterpane ? At my time of life I need a little care and attention. Besides ” she added, after a slight pause, “ Eugénie can come and dress herself

here. The poor girl might catch a severe illness if she were to dress herself in her own room in such weather. And we can then go and wish you a happy new year by the fire in the *salle*, downstairs."

"Ta! ta! ta! ta! what a tongue! You're beginning the year nicely, Madame Grandet. Why, you never talked so much before. I don't suppose you've been eating bread soaked in wine, eh?" A moment's silence ensued; and as his wife's proposition very probably suited his own convenience, he continued, "I'll go and do what you want, Madame Grandet. You are a good creature, I know, and I don't wish anything to happen to you at your age, although, generally speaking, the *La Bertellière* family seem to be made out of old cement. Isn't it so?" he called out, after a pause. "At all events, as we gained by their deaths I forgive them."

And he began to cough.

"You're very cheerful this morning, monsieur," said the poor woman seriously.

"I'm always so," he added, humming an air, as he entered his wife's room quite dressed.

"Yes, indeed, there's no doubt it's confoundedly cold this morning. We shall have a good breakfast, wife. De Grassins has sent me a *pâté de foie-gras*, finely truffled. I'm going to the diligence office to fetch it."

"He ought to have added a double napoleon for Eugénie," he continued, going up to his wife, and speaking in a low tone in her ear. "I've got no more gold, wife. I certainly did have a few old pieces of gold, there's no harm in telling you, but I was obliged to let them go for some matter of business."

And to celebrate the new year he kissed his wife on the forehead.

"Eugénie," cried the poor mother, "I don't know which side of the bed your father got out this morning, but he seems very kind and good-tempered. Bah! we shall get out of it!"

"What's the matter with master this morning?" said Nanon, as she entered her mistress's room to light the fire. "At first he said to me, 'Good morning, happy new year, you stupid thing. Go and light my wife's fire, she's cold.' And then I was as stupid as an owl when I saw him hold out his hand to give me a six-franc piece, which isn't clipped in the least. Look at it, madame. Oh! he's a good man, an excellent man. Now, there are some people who, the older they get, the harder they become; but he is like the cordial you make, and improves by keeping. He's a very good, kind, excellent man."

The real secret of Grandet's delight was the complete success which had attended his speculation. Monsieur de Grassins, after having deducted the amount which the old cooper owed him for discounting the hundred and fifty thousand francs' worth of Dutch bills, and for the additional sum which he had advanced in order to make up the amount required for the purchase of a sum of stock in the public funds producing eighty thousand francs a year, forwarded to him by the diligence a sum of thirty thousand francs in crowns, which remained over and above the half-year's dividends, and had announced to him a rise in all funded securities. They were then at 89; the principal capitalists bought in at the end of January at 92. Grandet had made during the past two

months twelve per cent. upon his capital, had gone through his accounts, and found he would thenceforward be receiving forty thousand francs every six months, free from all deductions. He immediately recognized the advantage of investing in the funds, a mode of investment for which provincials entertain an extreme aversion, and before five years had passed away, he found himself the master of a capital of four or five millions, which had increased without much care or attention on his part, and which, added to the value of his landed possessions, constituted a fortune of colossal magnitude. The six francs which he had presented Nanon with were, perhaps, the payment for an immense service which the poor woman, without being aware of it, had rendered her master.

"Oh! oh! where is Père Grandet off to, running about as early as this, as if there were a fire?" said the different shopkeepers to each other as they were opening their shops. Then when they saw him returning from the quay, followed by one of the porters belonging to the coach-office, carrying several full sacks on a wheelbarrow—

"Water always flows to the river, and the *bonhomme* was going for his money!" said one.

"He gets it from Paris, from Froidfond, from Holland!" said another.

"He'll end by buying up Saumur!" exclaimed a third.

"He don't care for the cold, he's always looking after his business," observed a woman to her husband.

"Eh! eh! Monsieur Grandet, if what you have there should happen to incommode you," said a clothier, his nearest neighbour, "I shall be happy to relieve you of it."

"Oh! these are only sous!" replied the vine-grower.

"Silver sous," said the porter, in a tone just above a whisper.

"If you want me to remember you, just put a bridle in your jaw," said Grandet to the porter, as he opened his own door.

"Ah! the old fox! I thought he was deaf," said the porter to himself; "it seems he hears fast enough when the weather's cold."

"Here's a twenty-sous piece for your new-year's gift! and mind, be mum! Pack off now!" said Grandet to him. "Nanon will take your barrow back. Nanon, are our linnets gone to church?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Then come and give a hand here. To work!" he cried, as he loaded her with the bags.

In a second the crowns were carried up into his room, where he locked himself in.

"When breakfast is ready, knock at the wall. Take the barrow back to the coach-office."

The family did not breakfast until ten o'clock.

"Your father will not think of asking to look at your gold, here," said Madame Grandet to her daughter, as they returned from hearing mass. "Besides, you must pretend to be very chilly. We shall, then, have plenty of time to replace your treasure for your birthday."

As Grandet was coming downstairs he thought of exchanging his Parisian crowns for sterling gold as soon as possible, and thought too what an admirable speculation the public funds formed. He made up his mind to put his income out in that way until the funds reached

as high as ninety-five francs. An untoward subject of reflection for Eugénie. As soon as he entered the room, his wife and daughter wished him a happy new year, the latter throwing her arms round his neck and caressing him, the former in a composed and quiet manner.

"Ah! ah! my child!" he said, kissing his daughter on both cheeks, "I am working for you, you know, and wish to make you happy. People can't be happy without money; no chance of it if they've got no money. Here, my girl, is a new napoleon for you, quite new; I had it sent from Paris, for I'm hanged if there's a grain of gold here. You're the only one who has any gold. Show me your gold, child."

"It's too cold now; let us have breakfast."

"Very well! afterwards, then, it will help us to digest it," returned Grandet; "that fellow De Grassins has sent us this *pâté* all the same, though. So eat away, young people, it costs us nothing. De Grassins is all right. I'm very well satisfied with him. That old fish is doing Charles a service, and for *nothing* too. He's settling that poor dead Grandet's affairs very satisfactorily. Oh! oh!" he said, with his mouth full, after a pause, "this is very good. Eat some of it, wife, there's nourishment enough in it for a couple of days at least."

"I'm not hungry. Besides, you know I am very ailing."

"Ah, yes! You can eat as much as you like, without fear of bursting yourself; you're a La Bertellière, a substantial sort of woman. A little bit yellow, certainly; but I like yellow."

The dread expectation of an ignominious and public

death is awaited, perhaps, with less fear and trembling by a man condemned to death, than the events which would be sure to follow the termination of the family breakfast were looked forward to by Madame Grandet and her daughter. The more cheerfully the old vine-grower spoke and ate, the more the hearts of those two poor women seemed to sink within them. In this terrible conjuncture, however, the daughter had a support afforded her which was denied her mother, for she drew strength and courage from her affection.

"For him, for him," she repeated to herself, "I would suffer a thousand deaths."

At this thought she cast a look, bright and full of courage, at her mother.

"Take all these things away," said Grandet to Nanon, when, towards eleven o'clock, the breakfast was over; "but leave us the table."

"We shall be more comfortable," he said, looking at Eugénie, "to look over your little treasure. Little; no, indeed. You're worth, as far as intrinsic value goes, five thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine francs, which, with the forty this morning, make six thousand francs all but one. Well! I'll give you the franc you want to make up that amount——. Well, what are you listening for? Show a quick pair of heels, Nanon, and go about your business," said Grandet, whereupon Nanon decamped incontinently. "Listen, Eugénie, you must let me have your gold. You'll not refuse your father, will you, my girl?"

Both mother and daughter sat without uttering a word.

"I've got no more gold. I had some, but I've no more left. I'll give you back your six thousand francs in *livres*, and you shall place them out in the way I'm going to show you. You mustn't think of *dozens* any longer. When I get you married, which will be soon, I shall find you a husband who will be able to offer you the most magnificent *douzain* that was ever heard of in the province. Listen, my girl. An excellent opportunity now presents itself; you can put your six thousand francs in the public funds, and you will get for them nearly two hundred francs' interest every six months, without taxes, or repairs, or hail, or frost, or high tides, or anything which helps to reduce an income. Perhaps you don't like parting with your gold, eh, girl? Never mind, bring it me all the same; I will scrape together all the gold coins I can, Dutch, Portuguese, Mogal rupees, Genoese, and with those which I shall give you on your fête-days, in three years you'll find that you will have replaced in gold the half of your pretty, darling, bewitching little treasure! What say you, my girl, to that? Hold your head up. Come, go and fetch the little dears! You ought to kiss me very fondly for telling you all these life and death secrets and mysteries about money. Well, well, money lives and moves and has its being like men; it comes and it goes, and sweats, and begets its like, just as men do."

Eugénie rose; but after having taken several steps towards the door, she suddenly turned round, looked her father full in the face, and said to him,—

"I have *my* gold no longer."

"You have your gold no longer!" cried Grandet,

starting back like a horse who suddenly hears a gun fired a dozen paces from him.

"No ; I have it no longer."

"You must be mistaken, Eugénie ?"

"No."

"By the bones of my father !" When the cooper uttered this oath, he made the room ring again.

"Gracious Heaven !" cried Nanon, "look how white madame is."

"Grandet," said the poor woman, "your anger will kill me."

"Ta ! ta ! ta ! ta ! *you* die ! no one ever dies in your family."

"Eugénie, what have you done with your pieces of gold ?" he exclaimed, darting towards her.

"Monsieur," said his daughter, as she knelt beside Madame Grandet, "my mother is suffering greatly, as can see ; do not kill her."

Grandet was alarmed at the pallor which had overspread his wife's face, usually so yellow in its hue.

"Nanon, come and help me to go to bed," said the mother, in a feeble voice ; "I feel as if I were dying."

Nanon immediately gave one of her arms to her mistress to lean upon, and Eugénie did the same ; and it was only with infinite difficulty that they were able to get her up to her own room, for she fainted almost at every step. Grandet was left alone. Nevertheless, a few minutes afterwards, he went up seven or eight of the stairs, and called out,—

"Eugénie, when your mother has got into bed, come downstairs again."

"Yes, father."

She was not long before she returned to her father, after having first reassured her mother as well as she could.

"Girl," said Grandet to her, "you must tell me where your money has gone to."

"Father," replied Eugénie coldly, looking for the napoleon on the chimney-piece, and holding it out to him, "if you make me presents which are not intended to be my own property, take them back again."

Grandet snatched the napoleon from her, and put it in his waistcoat-pocket.

"It's not likely I shall ever give you anything again. No, not that even!" he said, making a noise with his thumb-nail against his teeth. "You despise your father, I see; you've ceased to place any confidence in him; you don't seem to know what a father is. If he be not everything for you, he's nothing at all. Where's your gold?"

"Father, I love and respect you, notwithstanding your anger; but I would merely observe, with the greatest possible deference, that I am twenty-three years old. You have so very frequently told me that I am of age, that I am not likely to forget it. I have done what I pleased with my money, and be assured it is well placed——"

"Where?"

"That is an inviolable secret," she said. "Have not you your secrets?"

"Am I not the head of my family, and cannot I have affairs of my own?"

" This is *my* own affair."

" It must be a bad one if you cannot tell it to your father, Mademoiselle Grandet."

" It is an excellent one; but I cannot tell it to my father."

" At least tell me when you gave your gold ? "

Eugénie shook her head in sign of refusal.

" You had it on your fête-day, hadn't you ? "

Eugénie, who had grown as clever and cunning from affection as her father had become from avarice, merely repeated the same movement of her head.

" Surely the like of such a piece of obstinacy, or such a robbery, was never seen or heard before," said Grandet, in a voice which ascended in a crescendo scale, and which gradually reverberated through the whole house. " What! here, in my own house, under my own roof, some one has taken your gold,—the only gold there was in it! and I am not to know who it is! Gold is a very valuable thing. The best-brought-up girls may go wrong, and give away I hardly know what, as every one knows is the case among girls in very high families, as well as among citizens and others; but to give away gold! for you have given it to some one, eh ? "

Eugénie remained impassive.

" Was such a girl ever seen! Am I not your father? If you have put it out anywhere, you have a receipt——"

" Was I free, or not, to do as I liked with it? Was it my own ? "

" But you're a child ! "

" Of age."

Dumbfounded by his daughter's logic, Grandet turned pale, stamped his feet on the ground, and swore ; and then at last finding words, he cried out,—

“Cursed serpent of a child ! Ah ! bad lot ! You know very well that I love you, and you take advantage of it. She don't care about killing her father ! Pardieu ! you must have thrown our fortune at the feet of that vagabond who wears morocco-topped boots. By the bones of my father ! I don't wish to disinherit you, Heaven confound you ; but I curse you—you, your cousin, and your children ! You'll be sure to find that nothing good will come of it all, do you hear ? If it were to Charles that—— ; but no, no, it's not possible ; it cannot be possible that that cursed coxcomb can have robbed me ! ”

He looked at his daughter, but her cold and silent air remained unchanged.

“She won't move ! she won't flinch ! she is more of a Grandet, curse it, than I am ! You've not given your gold away for nothing, at all events, have you ? Do you hear ?—speak ! ”

Eugénie looked at her father, casting at him a glance full of scorn, which incensed him greatly.

“Eugénie, you are in my house, in your own father's house ; to remain here, you must be submissive to his will. The priests direct you to obey me.”

Eugénie hung down her head.

“You offend me in what I attach the greatest value to,” he resumed. “I don't wish to see you again until you are submissive. Go to your room, and remain there until I give you leave to quit it ; Nanon will give-

you some bread and water there. You've heard what I say ; be off ! ”

Eugénie burst into tears, and hurried away to her mother. After having walked round and round his garden several times in the snow, without bestowing a thought on the cold, Grandet suspected that his daughter might be in his wife's room. Delighted to detect her acting in direct opposition to his commands, he clambered up the stairs with the agility of a cat, and made his appearance in Madame Grandet's bedroom as she was smoothing down her daughter's hair, who had buried her face in her mother's bosom.

“ Be comforted, my poor child, your father will be calmer by-and-by.”

“ She has no father any longer ! ” said the vine-grower, bursting into the room. “ Are you sure, Madame Grandet, that so disobedient a girl as that is, is really our own child ? A fine education truly, and religious withal. Well ! How is it you're not in your own room ? Away with you, to prison,—to prison, girl ! ”

“ Do you intend to deprive me of my daughter, monsieur ? ” said Madame Grandet, whose face was flushed by fever.

“ If you wish to keep her, take her away ; clear the house of both of you. Where is the gold, I say, what has become of the gold ? ”

Eugénie rose, darted at her father a look full of pride, and then retired to her own room, the door of which her father immediately locked.

“ Nanon,” he called out, “ put the fire out in the *salle*.”

He then went and sat down in an armchair beside his wife's fireplace, and said to her :—

“She has very likely given it to that wretched seducer Charles, who only wanted to get hold of our money.”

Madame Grandet, aroused to a sense of the danger with which her daughter was menaced, and moved by her feelings for her, was enabled to summon up sufficient strength to remain, to all appearance at least, dumb, and deaf, and perfectly still.

“I knew nothing about it,” she replied, turning round with her face towards the side of the wall, to avoid her husband's kindling looks. “I am suffering so terribly from your violence, that if my presentiments are true, I shall never leave here until I am carried to my grave. You ought to spare me, monsieur, for I have never caused you a moment's trouble; at least I believe so. Your daughter loves you. I believe she is as innocent as a new-born babe; do not make her unhappy, revoke your decision. The cold is very severe, and you may be the cause of her having a serious illness.”

“I will neither see her nor speak to her. She shall remain in her room on bread and water until she has satisfied her father. What the devil! is not the head of the house to know where the gold of the house goes to? She had the only rupees which perhaps were to be found in France, and then, too, she had those Genoese pieces and Dutch ducats.”

“Monsieur, Eugénie is our only child; and even had she thrown them into the water——”

“Into the water!” exclaimed Grandet, “into the water. do you say! You are mad, Madame Grandet.

What I have said, I have said, and you know it. If you wish to preserve peace in the house, get the truth out of your daughter. Pump her; women understand how to do that with each other better than we do. Whatever she may have done, I shan't eat her. Is she afraid of me? Suppose she has covered her cousin with gold from head to foot, he's far out at sea by this time, isn't he? we can't run after him——"

"Well, monsieur——"

Excited either by the extreme state of nervousness into which she had been thrown, or by the unhappiness from which her daughter was suffering, whereby her affection and intelligence had been greatly increased, Madame Grandet's perspicacity enabled her to observe a terrible movement in the wen on her husband's nose, just as she was about to reply; and she immediately changed her idea, without changing the tone of her voice.

"Well, monsieur, have I greater influence over her than you have? She has told me nothing. She takes after you."

"What a tongue you've got this morning! Ta! ta! ta! ta! I believe you're setting me at defiance. You've come to an understanding with her, perhaps."

And he looked fixedly at his wife.

"Really, Monsieur Grandet, if you wish to kill me, you've only to go on like that. I tell you, monsieur, and if it were to cost me my life I will repeat it again, that you are wrong in treating your daughter as you're doing; she is more reasonable than you are. The money was her own property, she could not but make

a good use of it, and God only is entitled to know what our good works are. I implore you, monsieur, restore Eugénie to your favour again; for you will, by that means, lessen the effect of the injury your anger has done me, and will, perhaps save my life. My daughter, give me back my daughter, monsieur!"

"I shall be off, I can't stand this. My house is no longer supportable; both mother and daughter argue and talk as if—Broouh! Poh!"

"Yours is a very bitter new-year's gift, Eugénie," he cried. "Yes, yes! cry, cry! What you are doing will fill you with remorse, do you hear? What good does it do you if you take the sacrament six times a quarter, and yet secretly give your father's gold away to a lazy, indolent fellow, who will eat your very heart when you've nothing but that to offer him? You'll yet see what your Charles is worth, with his morocco boots, and his look as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. He has neither heart nor soul, since he dares to carry off a poor girl's money, without her parent's consent."

When the street door was closed, Eugénie left her room, which had been unlocked by Grandet as he went downstairs, and ran to her mother's bedside.

"You have shown a good deal of courage on your poor daughter's behalf," she said to her.

"You see, my child, where we are led by doing what is wrong: you have made me tell a falsehood."

"Oh! I will pray to Heaven to punish me alone for it."

"Is it true," said Nanon, entering the room in a state of bewilderment, "that mademoiselle is to be put on bread and water for the rest of her life?"

"What does that matter, Nanon?" said Eugénie quietly.

"Is it likely that I am going to eat all sorts of good things when the daughter of the house is eating dry bread? No, no!"

"Don't say a word about it, Nanon," said Eugénie.

"I'll hold my tongue, certainly; but you'll see."

Grandet dined alone for the first time during the last twenty-four years.

"You're a widower now, monsieur," said Nanon to him. "It's very disagreeable to be all alone with two women in the house."

"I'm not speaking to you. Hold your chattering tongue, or I'll send you packing. What's that you've got in your saucepan that I hear simmering on the fire?"

"It's some grease I'm melting down."

"Some people are coming to-night; light the fire."

In fact, the Cruchots, Madame de Grassins, and her son, arrived at eight o'clock, and were surprised not to see either Madame Grandet or her daughter.

"My wife is not very well, and Eugénie is upstairs with her," replied the old vine-grower, whose face did not betray the slightest emotion.

When, at the end of an hour's conversation on ordinary and commonplace subjects, Madame de Grassins, who had gone upstairs to pay Madame Grandet a visit, came down again, every one asked her how Madame Grandet was.

"Why, not at all well,—far from it," she said. "Her state of health seems to me really alarming. At her age, papa Grandet, she requires the greatest possible care."

"We shall see about it," replied the vine-grower, with an absent air.

They all wished him good evening. When the Cru-chots were in the street, Madame de Grassins said to them,—

"Something fresh has happened at the Grandets. The mother is very ill, and does not even seem to be aware of it; and the daughter's eyes are as red as if she had been crying for a long time. Is it likely they wish to marry her against her will?"

As soon as the vine-grower had gone to bed, Nanon went, without her shoes and as stealthily as possible, to Eugénie's room, and showed her a *pâté* baked in a saucepan.

"Here, mademoiselle," said the good-hearted creature, "Cornoiller gave me a hare. You eat so little, that this *pâté* will last you a week; and, as the weather's so cold, there's no chance of its spoiling. At all events, you won't have dry bread only, for that's not good for you at all."

"Poor Nanon," said Eugénie, pressing her hand.

"I have made it very good and very nice, and *he* won't know anything about it. I bought the bacon and laurel-leaves and everything else out of my six francs; I've a right to do what I like with my own." And then she ran away, fancying she heard Grandet.

For several months the vine-grower went to see his wife constantly, at different hours in the day, without once pronouncing his daughter's name, without seeing her, or making the slightest allusion to her. Madame

Grandet never left her room, and the state of her health gradually grew worse and worse. But nothing could bend the old cooper. He remained as inflexible, as cold, and as hard as a block of granite. He went about in his usual way, with the exception, however, that he no longer stammered, that he talked less, and showed himself, in all business matters, sterner and harder than he had ever been before. Now and then he made a mistake in his figures.

"Something has certainly happened at the Grandets," said the Cruchot and the Des Grassins factions, to one another.

"What can possibly have happened at the Grandets?" was the question generally asked in all the evening parties at Saumur.

Eugénie went to church under Nanon's guardianship. If, as she came out of the church, Madame de Grassins addressed a few words to her, she replied in an evasive manner, and without satisfying that lady's curiosity. At the end, however, of a couple of months it was impossible to conceal, either from the three Cruchots or from Madame de Grassins, the secret of Eugénie's seclusion. The time at last arrived when pretexts were found insufficient to account for her invariable absence; and then, without a possibility of ascertaining through whose means the secret had been betrayed, the whole town learnt that, from new-year's day, Mademoiselle Grandet had, by her father's orders, been shut up in her own room, upon bread and water, and without a fire; that Nanon made her all kinds of little delicacies, and took them to her during the night; and it was

known even that the poor girl was unable to see and nurse her mother, except during the time when her father was absent from the house.

Grandet's conduct was commented on with great severity. The whole town outlawed him, as it were, remembered the breaches of faith he had committed, remembered, too, his obduracy and hardness of heart, and ostracized him. As he passed along the street, people pointed him out to one another, whispering as they did so. When his daughter, accompanied by Nanon, passed along the winding street, on her way to mass or to vespers, the inhabitants went to their windows, and examined narrowly the countenance of the rich heiress, as well as the expression of her face, which revealed a melancholy mingled with angelic sweetness. Her own seclusion, her father's disgrace, were nothing to her. Had she not the map of the world, the little garden-seat, the garden itself, and the garden walls to feast her eyes upon? and did she not, once again, taste the honey which the kisses of fond affection had left upon her lips? She remained perfectly ignorant for some time of the conversations of which she was the object in the town; as much so, indeed, as her father was ignorant of them. Religious and pure in the sight of Heaven, her conscience and her love for her cousin helped her to endure patiently the anger and vengeance with which her father bore so heavily upon her.

But there was one profound and bitter distress which silenced every other cause of distress. Day by day her mother, that gentle and resigned creature, who seemed to grow almost beautiful with a preternatural brightness

as she approached her final resting-place, was sinking fast. Frequently did Eugénie reproach herself for having been the innocent cause of the painful and slow disease which was fast consuming her existence; and these feelings of remorse, although soothed by her mother's caresses, made her devoted affection for her cousin stronger than ever. Every morning, as soon as her father had gone out, she hurried to her mother's bedside, where Nanon brought her breakfast to her. But poor Eugénie, sad and suffering from her mother's sufferings, by a gesture directed Nanon's attention to her mother's face, wept bitterly, and dared not speak of her cousin.

Madame Grandet, therefore, was obliged to say to her, "Where is he? why does he not write?"

Both mother and daughter were completely ignorant of distances.

"Let us think of him, mother," replied Eugenie, "and not talk about him. You are suffering; you before everything."

By *everything* she meant Charles.

"My children," said Madame Grandet, "I do not regret dying. Heaven has watched over me, and has enabled me to look with joy upon the termination of my sufferings."

The words of the poor woman were always holy, and full of Christian charity. Whenever, at the usual breakfast hour, her husband came to her room where the breakfast was prepared, she held towards him, during the earlier months of the year, the same remark, repeated with an angelic sweetness, yet with the firm-

ness of a woman, who, feeling her death approaching, drew from that circumstance a courage in which she had proved wanting during her life.

"Monsieur, I thank you for the interest you take in my health," she replied, on his making the most ordinary and commonplace inquiries about her; "but if you wish to render the last moments of my life less bitter, and to alleviate my sufferings, restore your daughter to your affection. Show yourself a Christian, both as a husband and a father."

When he heard these words, Grandet sat down near the bed, and acted precisely as a man would do, who, seeing a shower of rain about to fall, quietly stations himself under the shelter of a doorway. He silently listened to what his wife had to say, but said nothing in reply. And when the most touching, the most affectionate, and the most solemn supplications had been addressed to him, he merely said,—

"You look a little pale to-day, my poor wife."

The most absolute forgetfulness of his daughter seemed to be engraved upon his iron forehead, upon his closed lips. He was not even moved by the tears which his vague replies, as he occasionally varied their expression, drew from his wife's eyes and flowed down her pallid cheeks.

"May Heaven forgive you, monsieur," she said, "as I do. A day may come when you may stand in need of indulgence yourself."

Since his wife's illness, he had not ventured to make use of his terrible "ta! ta! ta! ta!" But his despotic will had not been disarmed by that angel of gentleness,

whose homeliness of features disappeared day by day, driven away as it were by the expression of the higher qualities of heart and mind which her face revealed. She was all soul. The benign influence of prayer seemed to purify, to soften the coarser features of her face, and to illumine it with a bright and lustrous splendour. Who has not observed the phenomenon of that transfiguration of holy and saint-like faces, wherein the habits of the mind have succeeded in triumphing over the most plainly-fashioned features, by imprinting on them that peculiar animation which is to be found alone in the nobleness and purity of elevated thoughts? The spectacle of that transformation, wrought by sufferings which consumed the last shreds of human life in that poor woman, reacted, though but weakly, upon the old cooper, whose character remained like bronze. If his remarks had ceased to show the disdain he felt, an imperturbable silence, which enabled him to preserve his superiority as master of the house, governed his whole conduct. Whenever his faithful Nanon made her appearance in the market, certain jests or severe comments upon her master occasionally reached her ears; but although public opinion loudly condemned Père Grandet, yet the servant defended him, from a feeling of pride for the family.

"Well!" she said to her master's detractors, "shan't we all get harder as we get older? and why shouldn't he get a little hard, I should like to know? Don't tell such stories. Mademoiselle lives like a queen. She's alone, certainly, but it's her own fancy. Besides, my master has good reasons for what he does."

At last, however, one evening, towards the end of the spring, Madame Grandet, wasted by grief more than by illness, having been unsuccessful, despite her prayers and entreaties, in effecting a reconciliation between Eugénie and her father, confided her secret distress to the Cruchots.

"Put a girl of three-and-twenty years of age on bread and water!" exclaimed the President de Bonfons, "and for no motive; why this is a wrongful act of cruelty, and she can protest not only——"

"Come, nephew," said the notary, "leave your gibberish of the law courts alone. Be easy, madame; I will see that this seclusion is put a stop to, ay and from to-morrow, too."

Hearing that they were speaking of her, Eugénie left her room.

"Messieurs," she said, advancing towards them with a bearing full of dignity, "I beg you not to give yourselves any trouble about this affair. My father is master in his own house; so long as I reside under his roof I owe him obedience. It is not fitting that his conduct should be exposed to the approbation or disapprobation of others; he is accountable for it to Heaven alone. I claim from your friendship the most absolute silence in this respect. To blame my father, would be to attack our own claim to consideration. I thank you, messieurs, for the interest you have shown for me; but you will oblige me still further if you will put a stop to the offensive rumours which are circulating through the town, and of which I have been informed by mere chance."

"She is right," said Madame Grandet.

"Mademoiselle," replied the old notary respectfully, struck by the beauty which seclusion, melancholy, and love, had imparted to Eugénie, "the most effectual way to prevent people talking is to restore you to liberty."

"Well, then, my child, let Monsieur Cruchot arrange this affair, since he answers for its success. He knows your father, and knows how to deal with him. If you wish to see me happy during the very brief time I have to live, you and your father must be reconciled, whatever the cost may be."

The next day, according to a habit which he had adopted since his daughter's seclusion, Grandet went and took several turns in his garden. The moment he selected for this exercise was when Eugénie was brushing her hair. As soon as the old man reached the large walnut tree, he hid himself behind its trunk, and remained there for several minutes contemplating his daughter's long tresses, hesitating, most probably, between the thoughts which the natural firmness of his character suggested to him, and the desire he had to embrace his child. Often did he remain seated on the little rotten wooden seat where Charles and Eugénie had sworn an eternal affection for each other, while she looked at her father, either with a stealthy glance, or at the reflection of his figure in her looking-glass. If he rose from his seat, and resumed his walk up and down the garden, she sat down quietly at the window, and began to examine the garden wall, which was covered with the loveliest creeping plants, and from out the crevices of which Venus's-hair, bindweed, and a

yellow or white plant, very abundant among the vines at Saumur or at Tours, grew in luxuriant profusion.

Maître Cruchot having arrived early, found the old vine-grower seated, in a lovely day in June, on the little bench, leaning his back against the garden wall, and engaged in looking at his daughter.

"What can I do to serve you, Maître Cruchot?" he said, as soon as he perceived the notary

"I have come to talk upon a matter of business with you."

"Ha! ha! Have you got some gold to exchange for my crowns?"

"No, no; it's not a money matter at all; but it is about your daughter Eugénie. Every one is talking about her and about you."

"What are they interfering for? Every man is master in his own house."

"Agreed; every man is master of his own life, and may kill himself if he likes, or what is worse still, may play ducks and drakes with his own money, if he chooses."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, your wife is dangerously ill, my friend; you ought to consult Monsieur Bergerin. She is in extreme danger; and, if she were to die without having proper care and attention, you would not be easy, I know."

"Ta! ta! ta! ta! you know what is the matter with my wife! As soon as those doctors once get their foot in the house, they call five or six times a day."

"At all events you will do as you think best. We are old friends; you will not find in the whole of Saumur a man who takes a greater interest in what concerns

you than I do. I have done right, I feel, in speaking to you as I have done. And now let him who sows reap ; you're of age, you know how to go alone ; so do as you please. Besides, that was not my reason for coming to see you. It is a matter of far greater consequence for you. After all, you have no wish to kill your wife, I suppose, as she is too useful to you. I can see very well that you have never given a thought to your position with regard to your daughter, supposing Madame Grandet were to die. You would be obliged to render an account to Eugénie, since you and your wife are tenants in common. In that case, your daughter will be entitled to claim a share of your fortune, and to have Froidfond sold ; and, lastly, she succeeds to her mother, from whom you cannot inherit."

These words were like a thunderbolt to the old miser, who was not so well versed in legal points as in commercial matters. He had never given the sale of his property under such circumstances a single thought.

" So I advise you to treat her with kindness," said Cruchot, in conclusion.

" But do you know what she has done, Cruchot ? "

" What," said the notary, curious to have something communicated to him confidentially by Père Grandet, and to learn the cause of the quarrel.

" She has given her gold away."

" Well ! was it her own ? " asked the notary.

" They all say that ! " said the miser, letting his arms drop in a tragical manner.

" Are you, for the sake of a mere paltry nothing," resumed Cruchot, " going to shackle the concessions

which you may have occasion to ask her to make in your favour at her mother's death ? ”

“ Ah ! you call six thousand francs in gold a mere paltry nothing ! humph ! ”

“ Well, my old friend, do you happen to know what the inventory and the division of your wife's inheritance will cost, if Eugénie should insist upon it ? ”

“ What ? ”

“ Twenty or thirty thousand francs ! fifty, sixty perhaps ! Will you not be obliged to pay an enormous duty ? instead of which, by coming to an understanding——”

“ *By the bones of my father !* ” cried the vine-grower sitting down, very pale, “ we'll see about that, Cru-
chot ! ”

A moment's silence of agony ensued, and Grandet, looking at the notary, said to him :—“ What a hard life this is ! it is full of trouble and anxiety. Cru-
chot,” he resumed, in a solemn tone of voice, “ you don't wish to deceive me. Swear to me on your honour that what you have just been saying is founded in law. Show me the Code ; I want to see the Code ! ”

“ My poor friend,” replied the notary, “ do not I know my own trade ? ”

“ It is quite true, then ! I shall be stripped, betrayed, killed, eaten up by my daughter ! ”

“ She inherits from her mother.”

“ What good are children, then, I ask ? Ah ! I love my wife very much ; fortunately she is strong enough : she is a true Bertellière.”

“ She has not a month to live.”

The cooper struck his forehead with his hand, walked away, returned, and casting a terrible look at Cruchot, said to him :—

“What is to be done ? ”

“Eugénie might renounce, purely and simply, all right of succession to her mother. You do not intend to disinherit her, I suppose ? But, in order to obtain a partition of this kind, do not treat her harshly. In telling you that, my old friend, I am speaking against my own interest. What should I not have to do ?—liquidations, inventories, sales, partitions——”

“We’ll see about that, we’ll see about that. Don’t say another word about it, Cruchot : you make me quake and tremble all over. Have you received any gold ? ”

“No ; but I have several old louis, a dozen, perhaps, and you shall have them. Make it up with Eugénie, my good friend, for every one in Saumur is speaking ill of you.”

“The knaves.”

“Come, come, the funds are at 97.75. Be satisfied for once in your life.”

“At 97.75, Cruchot ? ”

“Yes.”

“Ah ! ah ! 97.75,” said the old miser, accompanying the notary to the street door. And then, too much agitated by what he had just heard to remain in the house, he went upstairs to his wife, and said to her—

“Well, mother, you can spend the day with your daughter ; I am going to Froidfond. Behave yourselves, both of you. It’s our wedding-day, wife. Here

are ten crowns for the altar* for the Fête-Dieu; you have been wishing to have one for a long time past. Give yourselves a treat, amuse and enjoy yourselves in any way you like, try and get well; and let us all be merry and happy again."

He threw ten crown-pieces of six francs each on his wife's bed, and took hold of her head to kiss her forehead.

"Good creature! you're getting better, aren't you?"

"How can you think of receiving in your house the holy elements which indicate forgiveness, while you keep your daughter an exile from your heart!" she said with emotion.

"Ta! ta! ta! ta! ta!" said the father, in a caressing tone of voice, "we'll see about that."

"Heaven be praised, Eugénie!" cried the mother, colouring from delight, "embrace your father; he forgives you."

The old man, however, had disappeared; he hurried away at the top of his speed towards the open country, endeavouring to calm his excited thoughts. Grandet had just entered upon his seventy-second year. During the last two years his avarice had increased, as all the confirmed and untiring passions of men invariably do. In accordance with an observation which has been made with respect to misers, to men whose minds are bent on ambition, and made, indeed, with respect to all persons whose lives have been consecrated to one

* Altar is a term, in addition to its other significations, applied to a small portable tablet for the consecration of the elements, when required to be consecrated away from a proper altar, in a church or chapel. It is a portable altar, in fact, which might be used on all occasions and in all places where required.

ruling idea, he had more particularly conceived a strong fancy for the symbol of his passion. The sight of gold, the possession of gold, had become his monomania. And as his love of despotic rule had increased in proportion with his avarice, the idea of giving up the direction of even the least portion of his property at the death of his wife, seemed to him almost against nature. To declare to his daughter and to the public authorities the amount of his fortune! to furnish an inventory of all his real and personal property! "It's like a man cutting his own throat," he said aloud, as he stood in the centre of a field examining the vine-stocks. At last he made up his mind, returned to Saumur, at the hour at which he usually dined, resolved to give way to Eugénie, to coax and wheedle her, in order that he might be able to die royally, and to keep, until the latest breath in his body, the reins of his millions in his hands. At the very moment when Grandet, who, by mere accident, had taken his pass-key with him, was creeping stealthily upstairs towards his wife's room, Eugénie had laid her cousin's beautiful dressing-case upon her mother's bed. Both of them, in Grandet's absence, were engaged in examining the likeness of Charles's mother, and indulging in the pleasure of contemplating what to them seemed like Charles's own portrait.

"It is exactly his forehead and his mouth," said Eugénie, just as the vine-grower opened the door.

At the look which her husband cast on the gold, Madame Grandet exclaimed, "Great Heaven! have pity on us."

The miser sprang at the dressing-case, as a tiger would leap upon a sleeping child.

"What's that?" he said, snatching up the treasure, and carrying it towards the window.

"Real gold! gold!" he cried, "a good deal of gold! it weighs three or four pounds. Ah! ah! Charles gave you this for your beautiful coins, I suppose? Why didn't you tell me so? It's a good bargain, girl! You are my own daughter. I can see that well."

Eugénie trembled in every limb.

"This does belong to Charles, don't it?" the old man went on to say.

"Yes, father; it is not mine. It is a sacred trust committed to me."

"Ta! ta! ta! he has taken your fortune, and you must replace your little treasure."

"Father."

The old miser, wishing to take his knife out of his pocket, in order to raise one of the plates of gold with which the dressing-case was inlaid, was obliged to place it on a chair. Eugénie darted forward to seize hold of it; but the cooper, who had kept his eyes fixed on his daughter, and on the casket at the same moment, repulsed her so violently as he suddenly stretched out his arm, that she staggered back against her mother's bed.

"Monsieur! monsieur!" cried the mother, as she started up.

Grandet had taken out his knife, and was on the point of lifting up the gold.

"Father," cried Eugénie, throwing herself on her knees, and advancing in that way in order to approach nearer to the old man, and, lifting up her hands implor-

ingly towards him, "my father! in the name of all the saints, of the Virgin, of Christ himself who died upon the cross, in the name of your eternal salvation, in the name of my own life, do not touch that! That casket is neither yours nor mine; it belongs to an unhappy relative who confided it to me, and I must restore it to him untouched."

"Why did you look at it, if it were a trust confided to you, as you say? Looking is worse than touching."

"Father, do not destroy it, or you will dishonour me. Do you hear, father?"

"For mercy's sake, monsieur!" said the mother.

"Father!" cried Eugénie, in a voice so piercing, that Nanon ran upstairs in a state of terror and alarm.

Eugénie sprang upon a knife within her reach, and armed herself with it.

"Well!" said Grandet coolly, with a grim smile on his lips.

"Monsieur! monsieur! you are killing me," said the mother.

"Father, if your knife does but touch the merest particle of that gold, I thrust this knife into my bosom. You have already killed my mother, and you will kill your daughter too. So now, go on, wound for wound."

Grandet kept his knife on the dressing-case, and looked, hesitatingly, at his daughter.

"Would you be capable of such a thing, Eugénie?" he said.

"Yes, monsieur!" said the mother.

"She'll be sure to do what she says," cried Nanon.
"Be reasonable, then, monsieur, for once in your life."

The cooper looked at the gold and his daughter alternately for a moment. Madame Grandet fainted.

"There now, you see! Madame is dying!" cried Nanon.

"Here, my girl, don't let us fall out about the casket; take it!" cried the cooper, hurriedly, as he threw the dressing-case on the bed.

"Nanon, go and fetch Monsieur Bergerin."

"Come, come, mother!" he said, kissing his wife's hand, "it's nothing, it's all over; we have made it up. Haven't we, girl? No more dry bread, you shall have what you like to eat. Ah! she's opening her eyes! Well, mother, mother dear——. Look! see I embrace Eugénie; she loves her cousin, and shall marry him if she likes; she shall keep the casket if she wants to do so. But live for a long time to come, my poor wife. Come, cheer up! You shall have the most beautiful altar that was ever made in Saumur."

"Oh! how can you treat your wife and child in such a manner!"

"I won't do it again, not once again!" cried the cooper. "You shall see if I do, wife."

He went to his cabinet, and returned with a handful of louis, which he scattered upon the bed.

"Here, Eugénie, here, wife; this is for you," he said, running his hands through the louis. "Come, come, cheer up, wife; get well again; you shan't want for anything, nor Eugénie either. Here are a hundred louis for her. You won't give them away, Eugénie, eh?"

Madame Grandet and her daughter looked at each other in amazement.

"Take them back, father; we need nothing but your affection."

"Well! that's all right," he said, putting the louis in his pockets, "we'll live like good friends now; we'll all go downstairs to dinner, and play at loto every evening, for a couple of sous; you'll soon be playing some of your old tricks again, eh, wife?"

"Alas! I should, indeed, like to do so, since it would please you," said the dying woman; "but I cannot get up."

"Poor mother!" said the cooper, "you don't know how much I love you. And my girl too!" He pressed her in his arms, and kissed her. "Oh! how nice it is to embrace one's daughter again after having had a quarrel together! Look, mamma, see, we're all right again, now. Go and lock that up," he said to Eugénie, pointing to the casket. "Go; don't be afraid; I won't say another word to you about it. Go, go."

Monsieur Bergerin, the most celebrated doctor in Saumur, soon arrived. When the consultation had terminated, he assured Grandet, in the most positive manner, that his wife was exceedingly ill, but that, by allowing the mind to remain perfectly tranquil, by a generous diet, and by the most scrupulous and vigilant attention, her life might probably be prolonged until the end of the autumn.

"Will it cost much?" said the cooper; "will she want any medicine?"

"Very little medicine, but a great deal of care," replied the doctor, who could not refrain from smiling.

"At all events, Monsieur Bergerin," replied Grandet,

“you are a man of honour, I know, aren’t you? I trust entirely to you; come and see my wife as many times as you think proper. Preserve my poor wife’s life; I am very fond of her, although I don’t show it. I have been a good deal put out lately. All kinds of annoyances seemed to enter my house as soon as my brother died, on whose account I am now spending at Paris a very large sum of money; so much, indeed, that I hardly know what to do, and yet it doesn’t seem to come to an end. Adieu, monsieur; if my wife’s life can be saved, save it, even should I be obliged to spend a couple of hundred francs to do so.”

Notwithstanding the fervent wishes which Grandet expressed with regard to his wife’s health (the succession to whose property by his daughter, as he now understood the law, was the first fatal blow to his peace of mind), notwithstanding the amiability which he manifested on all conceivable occasions for the slightest wishes of the amazed mother and daughter, and notwithstanding the most unremitting devotion displayed by Eugénie, Madame Grandet’s final end rapidly approached. Day by day she grew weaker and weaker, and gradually wasted away, as is generally the case, indeed, with women who are attacked at her age by a severe illness. She was as frail as the falling leaves of autumn; and the light of heaven shed a lustre upon her as does the sun when it passes through those autumn leaves, gilding them with its golden rays. Hers was a death worthy of the life she had led, a perfect Christian’s death, holy and sublime. In the month of October, 1820, her virtues, her angelic resignation, her love for her daughter, were revealed in a remarkable degree. She breathed her last without having

suffered a single murmur to escape her. A lamb free from blemish, her spirit quitted its earthly tenement, without a feeling of regret for the world she was leaving, except for the gentle companion of her cold and cheerless life, for whom her last looks seemed to predict a thousand misfortunes. She trembled at the idea of leaving this lamb, as pure as herself, alone in the midst of a selfish, heartless world, which would seek to strip her of her fleece, the wealth she possessed.

“ My child,” she said to her before breathing her last, “ it is in heaven alone you can expect happiness ; and you will one day learn the truth of this.”

The day after her mother's death, Eugénie found new motives for attaching herself to the house where she had first seen the light, where she had suffered so much, and where her mother had just expired. She could not look at the window and her mother's chair without bursting into tears. She fancied she must have misunderstood her father's character, when she saw herself the object of his most tender and thoughtful attention. The cooper had just offered her his arm to take her to breakfast, and he bent his eyes, almost kindly in their expression, for hours together upon her face, looking as intently at her, indeed, as if she had been gold. The old cooper bore so little resemblance to his usual self, and trembled to such an extent in his daughter's presence, that Nanon and the Cruchots, who were witnesses of this weakness, attributed it to his advanced age, and feared that his faculties were becoming enfeebled. But on the day when the family put on mourning, and as soon as the dinner to which

Maitre Cruchot had been invited, was over, Cruchot being the only one who was acquainted with his client's secret, the old miser's conduct explained itself.

"My dear child," he said to Eugénie when the cloth was removed and the doors carefully closed, "you are now your mother's heiress, and there are a few little matters to arrange between us two. Isn't that so, Cruchot?"

"Yes."

"Is it so very necessary that we should occupy ourselves with them to-day, father?"

"Yes, yes, child. I can't remain in my present state of uncertainty any longer. I don't suppose you wish to give me pain."

"Oh! father!"

"Very well, in that case, then, we must settle everything this evening."

"What do you wish me to do?"

"Why, that is not my affair, child. Do you tell her, Cruchot."

"Your father, mademoiselle, is not at all desirous of dividing or of selling his property, nor of paying the enormous duties upon such ready money as he may possibly possess. To effect this object, however, it would be necessary to dispense with making an inventory of the whole fortune which at the present moment remains undivided between yourself and your father——"

"Cruchot, are you quite sure you are right in speaking of it in such a way before a child?"

"Let me speak, Grandet."

"Yes, yes, my friend. But neither you nor my daugh

ter would wish to deprive me of anything. Would you, my girl ? ”

“ But what must I do, Monsieur Cruchot ? ” asked Eugénie.

“ Well,” said the notary, “ you would have to sign this document, whereby you would undertake to renounce all claim to the succession of your mother, and would leave to your father the beneficial use of all the property, of whatsoever kind it may be, which remains undivided between you, and the bare, naked right to which will be assured to you by him——”

“ I do not understand anything of what you are talking about,” replied Eugénie ; “ but give me the document and show me the place where I ought to sign my name.”

Grandet looked alternately at the deed and his daughter, and then at his daughter and the deed, suffering, at the same time, so much from the violence of his emotions that the perspiration stood in beads upon his forehead.

“ If, my girl, instead of signing this document, which will cost a great deal of money to get registered, you would, purely and simply, renounce all claim to the succession of your poor dear mother, who is dead and gone, and look to me for your future prospects, I should like that far better. I would then make you an ample and handsome income of a hundred francs a month. You see, you would be able to pay for as many masses as you like in addition to those which you get said already,—eh ! a hundred francs a month—in *livres*.”

“ I will do anything you like, father.”

“ Mademoiselle,” said the notary, “ it is my duty to observe that you are depriving yourself of——”

"Well, monsieur," she said, "what does that matter to me?"

"Hold your tongue, Cruchot. It's agreed, it's agreed!" cried Grandet, taking hold of his daughter's hand, and patting it between his own. "You're an honest girl, Eugénie; you won't retract what you have said, will you?"

"Oh! father!"

He embraced her with the greatest warmth, pressed her in his arms as if he were about to stifle her.

"Go, my child, you restore your father to life again. You give him what he has given you, and we are quits now. That's the way business ought to be done. Life is a matter of business. Bless you. You're a good, virtuous girl, who loves her papa very much. Do what you like now."

"To-morrow, then, Cruchot," he continued, looking at the bewildered notary. "You'll take care and prepare the deed of renunciation at the office of the Tribunal."

And the next day, about mid-day, the declaration whereby Eugénie completed her act of self-spoliation was duly signed. However, notwithstanding his plighted word, the old cooper, at the end of the first year, had not given her a sou of the monthly allowance of a hundred francs which he had so solemnly promised. And so, when Eugénie playfully spoke to him about it, he coloured slightly, hurried upstairs as fast as he could, and on his return, presented her with about a third of the jewels which he had taken from his nephew.

"Here, girl," he said, in a tone of voice full of irony. "will you have these for your twelve hundred francs?"

" Oh ! father, will you really give them to me ? "

He threw them into her apron.

" I'll give you as many next year. And so, in a short time, you'll have all his trinkets," he added, rubbing his hands, delighted at being able to speculate upon his daughter's feelings.

However, the old man, although still robust, was impressed with the necessity of initiating his daughter in all household secrets. For two consecutive years he made her, in his presence, order the different articles which were required for the daily consumption of the house, receive the rents, and taught her, slowly and by degrees, the names and extent of his farms, and the various fields into which they were divided. And lastly, about the third year, he had so thoroughly accustomed her to all the peculiarities of his avarice, and these peculiarities had so completely assumed the form of fixed and settled habits in her, that he could leave the keys of the pantry in her charge without the slightest anxiety, and installed her, in fact, the mistress of the house.

Five years passed away without a single event of any importance occurring in the monotonous existences of Eugénie and her father. Everything went on as heretofore with the chronometrical regularity of the movements of the old clock. Mademoiselle Grandet's deep-seated melancholy was no secret for any one ; but, if any person had formed an idea of its cause, never did she breathe a word which could justify the suspicions which the different coteries in Saumur entertained with regard to the state and condition of the rich heiress's heart. The only society

she received was composed of the three Cruchots and of several of their friends, whom they had, by insensible degrees, introduced into the house. They had taught her how to play at whist, and they came in every evening to make up a game.

In the year 1825, her father, feeling his infirmities increase, was obliged to initiate her in the secret of the extent of his landed possessions, and desired her, in the event of any difficulty arising with regard to them, to confide in Cruchot the notary, whose trustworthiness he had fully proved. Towards the end of the same year, the *bonhomme*, having attained the age of 79, was seized with an attack of paralysis, which made very rapid progress, and he was given over by Monsieur Bergerin. As she thought that it might not be long before she would be left alone in the world, Eugénie drew closer, as it were, to her father, and riveted more tightly the last link of affection which connected her with others. In her thoughts, as in the thoughts of all women of loving hearts, love was the whole world to her, and Charles was not there. There was something almost sublime in her devotion and absorbed attention for her aged father, whose mental and physical faculties began to fail, but whose avarice seemed, instinctively, to be kept alive ; so that, in this respect, his death presented no contrast to the life he had uniformly led.

Early every morning he had himself rolled in his chair, and placed between the fireplace of his bedroom and the door of his own private room, which was doubtlessly filled with gold. He remained there without moving ; but he looked, with nervous anxiety, first at those who

came to see him and then at the door lined with iron. He insisted upon knowing the causes of the slightest sound he heard ; and, to the notary's great astonishment could even hear the barking of the dog in the court-yard. He never failed to rouse himself, however, from the stupor into which he seemed to be plunged, on the very day and hour he usually received the rents of his farms, or settled his accounts with his workpeople, and gave his receipts. He then moved his easy chair, which ran on casters, until he had placed himself opposite to the door of his study, which he made his daughter open, and watched her narrowly until she had placed the bags of money, piled up one upon another, secretly away, and had again closed the door. Silently then he returned to his usual place, as soon as she had given him back the precious key, which he invariably kept in his waistcoat pocket, feeling it from time to time as if to assure himself that it was safe.

His old friend the notary, feeling that the rich heiress would necessarily marry his nephew the President, if Charles Grandet were not to return, redoubled his care and attention towards her father. He called every day and placed himself at Grandet's orders, and by his desire visited Froidfond, his lands, and estates, and vineyards ; sold the crops, and converted everything into gold and silver, which he caused secretly to be brought to the house and added to the bags which were piled up in the cabinet.

Grandet's last moments, however, fast approached, during which his iron constitution struggled hard against approaching dissolution. He cared not to move from his seat, beside the fire and facing the door of his study. He drew the coverlids towards him which had

been placed round his body, and rolling them up, said to Nanon,—

“Lock up that! lock up that! so that they can’t steal it from me!”

Whenever he opened his eyes, wherein his whole life seemed to have taken refuge, he turned his gaze immediately towards the door of the little room where his treasures were concealed, saying to his daughter, “Are they there? are they there?” in a tone of voice which denoted a kind of panic terror.

“Yes, dear father.”

“Look well after the gold; put some gold before me.”

Eugénie spread out some louis upon a small table, and he remained for hours together with his eyes fixed upon the louis, as a child, just beginning to notice, vacantly contemplates the same object; and like a child, too, a feeble smile stole over his face.

“That warms me!” he sometimes said, as an expression of excessive happiness illumined his whole countenance.

When the *curé* of the parish came to administer the last rites of the church to him, his eyes, in which all animation had for several hours past apparently perished, seemed once more to brighten with revived light at the sight of the cross, the candle-sticks, and the silver basin which contained the holy water; he looked at them with fixed and earnest attention, and the wen on his nose moved for the last time. When the priest held out towards his lips the silver-gilt crucifix in order that he might kiss the figure of Christ, he made a terrible effort to seize hold of it. This last effort cost him his life. He called out for

Eugénie, whom he could no longer see, although she was kneeling before him and bathing with her tears one of his hands, in which the chill of approaching death was already perceptible.

“ Bless me, my father.”

“ Take care of everything, you’ll have to give me an account of it all by-and-by, up there,” he said; thus proving that Christianity must be the religion of misers.

Eugénie Grandet thus found herself alone in the world, in the old house, having no one but Nanon on whom she could bestow a glance with the certainty of its being interpreted and understood; Nanon, the only creature who loved her for herself alone, and with whom she could converse about her sorrows and distress. Nanon was a kind of providence for Eugénie; she was no longer a servant, but an humble friend.

After the father’s death, Eugénie learned from Maître Cruchot that she possessed an income of two hundred thousand livres, arising from landed property in the arrondissement of Saumur; a million of francs in the three per cents., which were purchased when that stock was at 61 francs, and which were then worth 77 francs; in addition to that, two millions of francs in gold, and a hundred thousand francs in silver without including the arrears to be received. The total value of her fortune amounted to eleven millions.

“ Where can my cousin be? ” she said to herself.

The day on which Maître Cruchot handed over to his client the accounts of the succession, which had been examined and passed, Eugénie remained alone with

Nanon, seated opposite to each other, on either side of the fireplace of that *salle*, now so empty, where everything evoked a remembrance of the past, from the old chair on which her mother used to sit, down to the glass out of which her cousin had drunk.

"Nanon, we are alone now."

"Yes, mademoiselle, and if I only knew where that pretty young gentleman was, I would go on foot to find him."

"There is the sea between us, Nanon," she said.

While the poor heiress was weeping in company with her old servant in that cold and gloomy house which was the whole world for her, there was nothing else talked about, from Nantes to Orleans, but Mademoiselle Grandet's eleven millions of francs. One of the first steps she took was to secure to Nanon an annuity amounting to twelve hundred francs a-year, and as the latter already possessed six hundred francs a-year of her own, she became a very good match. In less than a month she changed her condition of maid for that of wife, under the protection of Antoine Cornoiller, who was appointed head keeper of the estate of Froidfond. Madame Cornoiller enjoyed an immense advantage over her feminine contemporaries. Although she was sixty-three years of age, she did not seem to be more than forty. Her large-made features had resisted the attacks of time. Thanks to the regimen of the almost monastic life she had led, she set old age at defiance by a fresh colour, by a constitution of iron, and by a face on which time seemed to have made no impression. Her plainness of features mattered little to her,

and she seemed plump, strong, and in good condition, her countenance indicating a happiness which made many persons envy Cornoiller's lot.

"She has a fast colour," said the draper.

"She's likely to have children yet," said the drysalter ;
"saving your presence, she's as well preserved as if she had been steeped in brine."

"She's well off, and Cornoiller has made a good hit," said another neighbour.

As she left the old house, Nanon, who was beloved by the whole neighbourhood, was overwhelmed with congratulations as she proceeded along the winding street on her way to the church. Eugénie gave her as a wedding present two dozen silver forks and spoons. Cornoiller, surprised at such an act of munificence, spoke of his mistress with tears in his eyes, and would willingly have allowed himself to be cut in pieces for her. Having become Eugénie's confidential friend, Madame Cornoiller enjoyed thenceforward a happiness which in her estimation was only equalled by that which she derived from her husband's society. She, too, at length, had a larder to open and to shut, provisions to give out in the morning, as her departed master had done. Moreover, she had a couple of servants to look after, a cook and a maid whose duties were confined to mending the house linen and making mademoiselle's dresses. Cornoiller discharged the functions of keeper and steward. It is superfluous to add that the cook as well as the maid, having been chosen by Nanon, were real treasures. Mademoiselle Grandet, in this way had four servants whose devotion was unbounded. The tenants did not find themselves any

better off at the death of their old landlord, so strictly had the usages and customs of his administration been established, which were continued by Monsieur and Madame Cornoiller with scrupulous care.

At thirty years of age, Eugénie was as yet ignorant of any of the enjoyments which this life has within its bestowal. Her sad and cheerless youth had passed slowly away by the side of a mother, whose heart, wounded and disregarded, had always been made to suffer bitterly. Abandoning with delight the existence she had led on earth, the mother pitied her daughter for having to live, and left behind her in that daughter's heart some faint feelings of remorse and of undying regret. The first and only love that Eugénie had ever entertained, was replete with a feeling of melancholy. At the time when she had barely more than seen her lover, during the few short days he had remained in her father's house, she had given him her heart at the very moment when their kisses had been furtively exchanged ; and then, he had gone away, placing a whole world between them both. This affection, which had been cursed by her father, had almost cost her her mother's life, and she herself derived from it feelings of bitterness mingled with the frailest hopes. So that, hitherto, she had hurried forward in the pursuit of happiness, parting with the strength and vigour of her being without return.

In our moral as in our physical life, there exist an aspiration and a respiration ; so true is it that the being of one must necessarily absorb the feelings of the being of another, and join them in an intimate union, so as to restore them richer and fuller than before. Were it not

for this beautiful human phenomenon, the heart would become dead and lifeless, for deprived of air it suffers and wastes away. Eugénie, too, began to suffer. For her, wealth afforded neither power nor consolation. Her very existence depended on love, on religion, and on her faith in the future. Love opened to her the mysteries of eternity. Her heart and the Gospel taught her that there were two worlds to look forward to. Day and night her whole mind was occupied with two thoughts, infinite in extent, which, in her estimation, perhaps, formed but one alone. She wrapped herself up in her own thoughts, loving, and believing herself loved in return. For seven years her passion had engulfed every other feeling.

Her treasures were not the eleven millions, the income of which was heedlessly and carelessly accumulated by her, but the dressing-case which once had been Charles's, the two portraits hanging beside her bed, the jewels which she had purchased from her father, and had spread out proudly upon a layer of cotton wool in one of the drawers of the old chest in her room; her aunt's thimble which her mother had worn, and which every day she herself most religiously put on in order to work at a piece of embroidery, a very Penelope's undertaking, and commenced for no other reason than that of enabling her to make use of that piece of gold, rich in so many recollections.

It did not seem at all probable that Mademoiselle Grandet had any intention of marrying during the period of her mourning. The sincerity of her piety was well known, and for this reason the Cruchot family, whose

line of policy was wisely directed by the old abbé, were perfectly contented to encompass the heiress on every side, and to surround her with the most affectionate attentions. Every evening her *salle* was filled with a society composed of the most ardent and devoted Cru-chotins of the neighbourhood, who did their utmost and their best to sing aloud the praises of the mistress of the house in every conceivable key. She had her physician in ordinary, her grand almoner, her chamberlain, her lady of the bedchamber, her prime minister, and, more than all, her chancellor, a chancellor who would keep nothing from her. Had the heiress expressed a wish for a train-bearer, one would have been found for her immediately. She was a queen, and the most ingeniously bepraised of all queens. Flattery never emanates from great minds, but rather is the appanage of little minds, who succeed in their efforts to reduce themselves to the smallest proportions, in order the better to effect an entrance into the all-important and influential sphere of the person around whom they gravitate. Flattery always implies an interested motive. In this way, therefore, those individuals with whom, evening after evening, Mademoiselle Grandet's *salle* was filled, and who had styled Eugénie Mademoiselle de Froidfond, succeeded most marvellously in overwhelming her with praises. This concert of adulation and homage, to which Eugénie was unused, at first made her blush; but insensibly, and in spite of the outrageous character of the compliments which were paid her, her ears so soon became accustomed to hear her beauty lauded, that if any one newly introduced had pronounced her ugly,

she would have been far more sensibly affected by it now than would have been the case eight years before. She at last acquired a partiality for the incense which was offered up to her, and which she secretly placed at the feet of her idol ; and, consequently, she gradually fell into the habit of permitting herself to be treated in the light of a sovereign power, and of seeing her court fully attended every evening.

Monsieur le Président de Bonfons was the hero of this little society, wherein his wit, his personal appearance, his acquirements, his amiability of disposition, were untiringly applauded. One evening, some person present remarked, that, during the last seven years, he had greatly increased his fortune ; that Bonfons was at least worth ten thousand francs a-year, and was enclosed, as were the other landed possessions of which the Cruchot were the owners, within the circuit of the heiress's vast domains.

"Are you aware, mademoiselle," said one of her usual visitors, "that the Cruchots have among them an income of forty thousand francs a-year ?"

"And then, there are their savings," continued Mademoiselle de Gribeaucourt, an old adherent of the Cruchot family. "A gentleman from Paris lately came here to offer Monsieur Cruchot two hundred thousand francs for his business. He would be obliged to sell it if he could get nominated a *juge de paix*."

"He is desirous of succeeding Monsieur de Bonfons in the Presidency of the Tribunal, and is smoothing the way for it," replied Madame d'Orsouval, "for Monsieur le Président will become Counsellor, and then President

of the Court ; he is far too able a man to fail in attaining such a position."

"Yes, indeed, he is a highly distinguished man," said another. "Do you not think so, mademoiselle?"

Monsieur le Président had done his utmost to act in accordance with the character which he was desirous of filling. Despite his forty years of age ; despite, too, his dark and stern features, full of lines, as nearly all judicial features are, he comported himself like a young man, carried a walking-cane which he twisted jauntily about, never took snuff at Mademoiselle de Froidfond's house, where he invariably made his appearance wearing a white neckerchief, and a shirt the large heavy frills of which gave him a certain family air which distinguishes the members of the genus turkey. He spoke in a familiar manner to the beautiful heiress, calling her "Our dear Eugénie." And, in fact, with the exception that there were a greater number of persons present, that Loto was replaced by whist, and that the figures of Monsieur and Madame Grandet were no longer there, the scene with which this story opened remained in almost every respect unaltered. The pack still pursued Eugénie and her millions, but the pack was more numerous, barked better, and pressed round its prey with greater unanimity. If, therefore, Charles had arrived from the remotest part of India, he would have found the same persons and the same interests existing as of old ; not only because Madame de Grassins, towards whom Eugénie displayed the greatest kindness and consideration, persisted in teasing the Cruchots, as of old ; but now, as formerly, his cousin's face would have been the principal object in

the whole picture, and as formerly, too, he would himself have reigned there triumphantly. And yet a certain progress had been made. The bouquet which the President used formerly to present to Eugénie on her fête-days had now become a periodical gift. Every evening he brought the rich heiress a large and magnificent bouquet, which Madame Cornoiller placed conspicuously in a vase in the room, and secretly threw away in one of the corners of the court-yard as soon as the visitors had taken their departure.

Early in the spring, Madame de Grassins endeavoured to disturb the peace of mind of the Cruchot faction by talking to Eugénie about the Marquis de Froidfond, whose ruined family might be reinstated in its former position, if the heiress would restore his family estates by the means of a marriage contract. Madame de Grassins vaunted in the highest terms the peerage, the court, and the title of marchioness ; and then considering Eugénie's smile of disdain as a token of her approbation, she asserted that the marriage of Monsieur le Président de Cruchot was not so advanced as was generally supposed.

"Although Monsieur de Froidfond is fifty years of age," she said, "he does not look so old as Monsieur Cruchot is. He is a widower, and has children, I admit ; but he is a marquis, he will be a peer of France, and as times now go, where will you find marriages of that class ? I know, from actual knowledge, that the late Monsieur Grandet, in joining all his own property to the Froidfond estate, had some idea of grafting himself on the Froidfond family. He often told me so. Oh ! he was a sly, cunning old fellow, was old Grandet."

"Well, Nanon," said Eugénie one evening as she was going to bed, "he has not written to me once in seven years!"

While these things were happening at Saumur, Charles was making his fortune in India. The venture or cargo he had taken out with him had sold exceedingly well. In a very short time he had realized a sum of six thousand dollars. As soon as he had crossed the line, he very speedily got rid of many of his prejudices, and was not long before he discovered that the best means of making his fortune, in the regions of the tropics as well as in Europe, was to buy and sell his fellow-creatures. He directed his course, accordingly, to the coasts of Africa, and entered into the slave trade, adding to his traffic in human beings the purchase and disposal of such classes of goods as could be most advantageously traded with among the different markets which his own personal interests led him to visit. He entered into his various speculations with an activity which did not leave him a single moment free. The one dominant idea with which he was possessed was that of making his appearance again in Paris with all the distinction that a large fortune confers, and of taking a position there, even yet more brilliant than that from which he had fallen. By dint of travelling through so many countries, and coming into contact with so many men, and of observing the different customs prevailing among them, his ideas underwent a change, and he became a confirmed sceptic in all things. He had ceased to preserve any fixed notions with regard to what was right and wrong, by noticing that certain things were considered as crimes in one country

which were regarded as virtues in another. Further, by the incessant contact of personal and selfish interests, his heart became callous, contracted in its impulses, and seemed as if it had withered in his bosom. The hereditary failings of the Grandets were not wanting to enable him to fulfil his destiny. Charles became hard in his nature, eager for gain; he sold Chinese, negroes, birds'-nests, children, artists—in fact, he was a usurer on a large scale. Again, too, the habit he had acquired of defrauding the revenue of its rights and dues, rendered him less scrupulous with regard to the rights and dues of his fellow-men. He proceeded to Saint Thomas to purchase at the very lowest price various articles of merchandise which had been captured by pirates, and he afterwards conveyed them to those places where the supply was scanty.

If the noble and innocent face of his cousin Eugénie accompanied him in his first voyage, like the image of the Virgin which the Spanish sailors carry on board their vessels, and if he attributed his first success to the magical influence of the wishes and prayers which that gentle creature breathed forth for him, it was not long before the negresses, half castes, white women, Javanese, and others, added to his various adventures in different countries, completely effaced the remembrance of his cousin of Saumur, the house, the garden seat, as well as the kiss which he had snatched from her lips in the passage. He certainly did remember the little garden, surrounded by its old walls, inasmuch that it was there that his hazardous destiny had first begun,—but his family he disowned. His uncle was an old cur, who had cheated

him of his jewels; Eugénie had no place either in his heart or in his thoughts, she had a place certainly in his mercantile affairs as *creditor* for a sum of six thousand francs. Thus arose the silence of Charles Grandet, who, in the Indies, at Saint Thomas, on the African coast, at Lisbon, and in the United States, had assumed, in order to avoid compromising his name, the pseudonym of Chippart, and in this way was enabled, without running any risk of detection, to show himself almost in every quarter of the globe indefatigable, bold, enterprising, and greedy of gain; like a man, who, resolved to make his fortune *quibuscumque viis*, does his utmost to abandon his infamous courses as speedily as possible, in order to remain an honest man during the rest of his days.

Following out this system his fortune was rapid and brilliant. Accordingly, in 1826, he returned to Bordeaux, on board the *Marie-Caroline*, a fine brig, belonging to a Royalist commercial house. He possessed sixteen hundred thousand francs' worth of gold dust in three barrels firmly secured, and he expected to make from seven to eight per cent. by it, by changing it into money at Paris. On board this brig happened to be one of the gentlemen in waiting upon His Majesty King Charles the Tenth, Monsieur d'Aubrion, a good old man who had been silly enough to marry a fashionable woman. His fortune was invested in the West India Islands, where, to repair the extravagances of Madame d'Aubrion, he had gone to realize the wreck of his property. Monsieur and Madame d'Aubrion, of the family of d'Aubrion de Busch, the last chief of whose house died in 1789, found themselves reduced to an income of not more than twenty

thousand francs a year. They had one daughter, tolerably plain, whom the mother was anxious to marry without a portion, her own income being hardly sufficient to enable her to live at Paris. This was an undertaking the success of which would seem of the most problematical character to every one moving in society, notwithstanding the ability which is so readily accorded to women of fashion. And even Madame d'Aubrion herself almost despaired when she looked at her daughter, and was obliged to admit that the amplest grounds existed for others keeping aloof from her, even those who might be completely infatuated with regard to rank.

Mademoiselle d'Aubrion was a young lady long and thin, spare and lank, with a mouth expressive of disdain, surmounted by too long a nose, thick at the tip, of a sallow hue in its normal condition, but which became exceedingly red after eating; a phenomenon more disagreeable in the centre of a pale and jaded-looking face than in any other. In fact, she was such as a mother of eight-and-thirty years of age (who, still beautiful herself, felt she was not without certain claims to admiration) could possibly wish her to be. But, as a counterpoise to these disadvantages, the Marquise d'Aubrion had given her daughter a very distinguished manner and bearing, and made her submit to a course of treatment which, provisionally, kept her nose as near the ordinary flesh coloured tint as possible; had taught her the art of dressing herself with taste and originality; had endowed her with attractive manners; had instructed her in the mystery of those melancholy looks which excite a man's liveliest interest, and make him

fancy that he is on the point of meeting the angel he is in search of ; she had initiated her in the various manœuvres of the foot, to advance it for the purpose of its smallness being admired at the very moment when the nose had the impertinence to heighten its colour ; and, in fact, she had turned her daughter to the very best possible account under the circumstances. By means of large sleeves, deceptive bodices, very full and tastefully-trimmed dresses, and with what may be termed a high-pressure corset, she had obtained certain results, so curious that, for the instruction of mothers generally, she ought to have deposited them in a museum.

Charles became very intimate with Madame d'Aubrion, whose great wish was to become intimate with him. Many persons even pretended that, during the voyage, the beautiful Madame d'Aubrion neglected nothing to capture so rich a son-in-law. When they landed at Bordeaux, in the month of June, 1826, Monsieur, Madame, and Mademoiselle d'Aubrion and Charles stayed together at the same hotel, and together started for Paris. The Hôtel d'Aubrion was heavily incumbered with mortgages, but Charles would pay them off. The mother had already spoken of the happiness which she would derive by giving up the apartments on the ground-floor to her son-in-law and to her daughter—to the young married couple, in fact. In no way a partaker of M. d'Aubrion's prejudices with respect to nobility of birth, she had promised Charles Grandet to obtain from the king Charles the Tenth a royal ordinance, which would authorize him, Grandet, to bear the name of d'Aubrion, to assume the arms, and, in consideration of the acquisition of a pro-

perty producing an annual income of 80,000 francs, to succeed d'Aubrion in the various titles of Captal de Busch, Marquis d'Aubrion, Comte de Rochegourd, &c. By uniting their fortunes, by living amicably together, and with the addition of certain sinecure appointments, they might reckon upon an income of a hundred and a few odd thousand francs a-year at the Hôtel d'Aubrion.

"And when one has a hundred thousand francs a-year. a name and family, when one goes to court, for I will get you appointed a gentleman of the bedchamber, a man becomes anything he pleases. And you, therefore, may become, if such should be your fancy, a Member of the Council of State, Prefect, Secretary to an Embassy, or even an Ambassador. Charles the Tenth is very much attached to d'Aubrion, and they have known each other from their childhood."

His head turned with ambitious longings by his intended mother-in-law, Charles, during the voyage, had fondly indulged in all the flattering hopes which had been presented to him by so skilful a hand, under the guise, as it were, of confidences poured from one heart into another. Supposing that his father's affairs had been arranged by his uncle, he saw himself suddenly established in the Faubourg Saint Germain, in which society every one at that time was most desirous of entering, and where, in the shadow of Mademoiselle Mathilde's blue nose, he could make his reappearance as Comte d'Aubrion, as the Chabots one day made theirs as the Rohans. Dazzled by the success of the Restoration which he had left tottering, and bewildered and dazzled by these aristocratic notions, the intoxication which had commenced on

board the brig continued unchecked at Paris, and he resolved to leave nothing undone to attain the high position which his egotistical mother-in-law partially revealed to him. For him, therefore, his cousin Eugénie was nothing more than a mere speck in the wide space which this brilliant perspective presented. He paid his Annette a visit, who, as a woman of the world, warmly advised her old friend to contract the alliance, and promised him her support in all his ambitious enterprises. Annette was enchanted to get Charles married to a very plain and extremely uninteresting young person, for Charles's residence in the Indies had rendered him exceedingly attractive. His complexion had become darker, his manners more decided and manly in their tone, like those of men accustomed to work their own way, to command and achieve success. Charles breathed more freely in Paris when he found that there was a part for him to play there.

De Grassins, learning his return, his approaching marriage, and the fortune he possessed, paid him a visit for the purpose of talking to him about the 200,000 francs required for the discharge of his father's debts.

He found Charles in close conference with the jeweller of whom he had ordered the jewels he intended to present to Mademoiselle d'Aubrión on her marriage, and who was engaged in submitting the designs for his approval. Notwithstanding the magnificent diamonds which Charles had brought back with him from India, the expense of their setting, the massive plate, as well as the more inexpensive jewelry of the new establishment already amounted to more than a hundred thousand francs. He

received De Grassins, whom he did not recognize, with the impertinence of a young man of fashion, who in the Indies had killed four men in four different duels. Monsieur de Grassins had already called upon him three times. Charles listened to him with a cold, impassive air, and then replied, without having very clearly understood what his visitor had been saying :

“ My father’s affairs are not mine. I thank you, monsieur, for the trouble you have been good enough to take, but I shall be unable to avail myself of it. I do not intend that the few hundred thousand francs which I have scraped together by the sweat of my brow should now be flung at the heads of my father’s creditors.”

“ But suppose that your father, within the next few days, was to be declared a bankrupt ? ”

“ Monsieur, within the next few days I shall assume the name of the Comte d’Aubrion ; you perceive, therefore, that it will be a matter of perfect indifference to me. Besides, you know better than I do, that when a man has a hundred thousand francs a year, his father has never been a bankrupt.”

And he politely showed De Grassins out of the room.

In the beginning of the month of August of that same year, Eugénie was seated on the little wooden bench where her cousin had sworn an undying affection for her, and where she sometimes breakfasted when the weather was fine. The poor girl, at that moment, in one of the brightest and freshest of mornings, was engaged in happy musings, revolving in her mind the great as well as the little events of her affection, and the catastrophes by which they had been followed. The sun was shining

brightly on that pretty piece of the garden-wall, cracked from the top to the bottom, nearly in ruins, and which the fanciful heiress would not permit to be touched, although Cornoiller frequently assured his wife that some one would one day or another be buried under it.

At this moment the postman knocked at the door, handed a letter to Madame Cornoiller, who hurried into the garden calling out, "A letter, mademoiselle." And she gave it to her mistress, saying, "Is it what you have been expecting?"

These words re-echoed as loudly in Eugénie's heart as they did in reality between the wall of the court-yard and the wall of the garden.

"Paris! it is from him! He has come back!"

Eugénie turned very pale, and kept the letter for a moment unopened in her hand. Her heart throbbed too heavily to allow her to break the seal and read it.

Nanon remained standing before her mistress, with her hands resting on her hips; and her delight seemed to make its escape like smoke through the cracks in her brown face.

"Read it, mademoiselle——"

"Ah! Nanon! why does he return by way of Paris, when he left by way of Saumur?"

"Read, you will know."

Eugénie tremblingly broke the seal. An order upon the house of *Madame de Grassins et Corret* of Saumur fell out. Nanon picked it up.

"'My dear cousin——'"

"I am Eugénie no longer," she thought, and her heart turned sick within her.

“ ‘ You——• ’ ”

“ He used to say *thou* ! ”

She folded her arms, dared not read any more of the letter, and her eyes filled with tears.

“ Is he dead ? ” asked Nanon.

“ He would not write if he were, Nanon,” said Eugénie.

At last she read the whole of the letter, which ran as follows :

“ MY DEAR COUSIN,

“ You will learn, I trust with pleasure, that I have been fortunate in my undertakings. You brought me luck ; I have returned rich, and have followed my uncle’s advice, of whose death, as well as that of my aunt, Monsieur de Grassins has just informed me. The death of our parents is in accordance with the natural course of things, and we succeed them in our turn. I hope that you are consoled by this time ; time works wonders. I have found it so myself. Yes, my dear cousin, unfortunately for me, the age of illusions has passed away. How could it be otherwise ? In my travels through various countries, I have reflected on life. From the child I was, I have become a man on my return. I now think of many things on which I formerly never bestowed a thought. You are free, cousin, and I too am still free ; apparently there is nothing to interfere with the realization of our little projects ; but I have far too much honour and candour in my character to conceal the situation of my affairs from you. I have not forgotten that I do not belong to myself ; I have always

remembered in my long voyages the "little wooden bench—

Eugénie started up as if she had been on burning coals, and went and sat down on one of the steps of the courtyard.

—"the little wooden bench where we swore to love each other for ever; I have remembered, too, the passage, the gloomy-looking *salle*, my bedroom in the attic, and that night when, by your delicate kindness, you rendered my future career less difficult for me. Yes, these recollections have kept up my courage, and frequently have I said to myself that you were thinking always of me as I was thinking often of you, at the hour we had agreed upon. Have you really looked at the passing clouds at nine o'clock? Yes, I know you have. Far be it from me, therefore, to betray a friendship which I regard as sacred; I should be wrong, indeed, were I to deceive you. I must, therefore, tell you that I am on the point of forming an alliance which realizes every idea I had conceived with regard to marriage. Love, in marriage, is a mere chimera. My experience now assures me that when a man marries he must obey implicitly the laws of society, and combine all those essential requisites which the world exacts. Besides, there is already a difference of age between us which would, perhaps, be far more likely to affect your future, my dear cousin, than mine. I do not refer to your manners, or to your education, or to your habits of living, which are in no way in harmony with the life which is led at Paris, and would very probably not accord

with my ulterior projects. My views are to maintain a great household, to receive a great deal of company, and I believe I am not mistaken in supposing that you prefer a calm and tranquil mode of life. No, I will be more frank, and would prefer to make you the arbiter of my position ; it is but fair to inform you of it, you with whom the decision will rest. I now possess an income of sixty thousand livres a year. This fortune enables me to form an alliance with the family of d'Aubrion, whose heiress, a young girl of 18 years of age, brings me in marriage her name, a title, the post of one of the gentlemen in attendance on his majesty, and a most brilliant position in society. I will confess, my dear cousin, that I have not the slightest affection in the world for Mademoiselle d'Aubrion ; but, by an alliance with her, I assure to my children a position in the world, the advantages of which will one day be almost incalculable ; every day monarchical ideas seem to become more and more established. A few years hence, therefore, my son, who will have become Marquis d'Aubrion, possessing a landed estate which will produce him an income of thirty thousand livres a year, will be able to assume such a position in the State as he will be fitted for ; our children's claims on us are paramount. You see, cousin, with what perfect candour I expose to you the state of my heart, of my hopes, and of my fortune. It is possible that you, too, may have forgotten our childish nonsense after seven years' absence ; but I have not forgotten either your kind indulgence, or the language I then used in expressing my thoughts ; I remember them all, even those which were the most lightly spoken, and on which a young man, less conscientious than I am,

with a heart less youthful and less upright, would never dwell for a moment. In confessing, as I have done, that I am contemplating a marriage merely of convenience, and that I still remember our childish affection, do I not place myself entirely at your mercy, render you mistress of my fate, and tell you, that if I must renounce all those ambitious views of social advantage, I will willingly content myself with that pure and simple happiness of which you presented me with so many touching pictures."

"Tan! ta! ta!—Tan! ta! ti!—Tinn! ta! ta!—Tann!" &c., &c., had hummed Grandet from the air of *Non più andrai*, as he signed himself,

"Your devoted cousin,

"CHARLES."

"*Tonnerre de Dieu!* that is behaving handsomely enough, I think," he said to himself, and, after having looked for the banker's draft, he added the following postscript:—

"P.S.—I add to my letter a draft upon the house of DeGrassins of 8,100 francs to your order, payable in gold, including interest and compound interest on the sum you were kind enough to lend me. I am expecting a box from Bordeaux, containing several articles, which you will allow me to offer you in acknowledgment of my eternal gratitude. You can send my dressing-case to me by the diligence, addressed to M. Grandet, Hôtel d'Aubrion, Rue Hillerin-Bertin."

"*By the diligence!*" said Eugénie. "An article for

which I would have laid down my life a thousand times."

Terrible and complete disaster. The vessel foundered without leaving a floating rope or plank upon the wide ocean of her hopes. There are certain women, who, on finding themselves abandoned, would tear their lover from a rival's arms, kill her, and flee to the end of the world, to the scaffold, or the tomb. There is something grand in this, undoubtedly, the motive power of so noble a crime is a sublimity of passion which awes human justice. Other women droop their heads, and suffer in silence; they continue to exist, gradually dying and full of resignation, weeping and full of forgiveness, praying and treasuring up the past in their memory until their latest breath. This is love, true love, such love as angels feel,—that proud love which exists upon its own grief, and of which it dies. This was Eugénie's feeling after having read that horrible letter. She lifted up her eyes towards heaven, as she thought of the last words her mother had uttered, she who, with that clearness of perception which some dying persons possess, had seemed to read the future with a penetrating and lucid gaze; and then, poor Eugénie, thinking over her mother's death, and the life which she had prophesied for her, measured her whole future destiny with a single glance. All that was now left for her to do was to unfold her wings, direct her onward course towards heaven, and pass away her life in prayer until the day of her deliverance should arrive.

"My mother was right," she said as she wept; "suffer and die!"

Slowly she left the garden and went into the *salle*, but, contrary to her usual custom, she avoided the passage. But the memory of her cousin rose before her in that old dingy salon, on the mantelpiece whereof a certain saucer invariably stood, which she used every morning at her breakfast, together with the old Sèvres sugar-basin. That morning was to be an important and eventful one for her. Nanon announced the curé of the parish, who, from his connection with the Cruchots, was in the interest of the President de Bonfons. Several days previously, the old abbé had prevailed upon him to speak to Mademoiselle Grandet, in a strictly religious point of view of the obligations she was under to contract marriage. When Eugénie saw her pastor enter, she fancied he had called for the five hundred francs which she gave every month for distribution among the poor, and told Nanon to go and fetch the money ; but the curé began to smile, as he said,—

“To-day, mademoiselle, I have called to talk to you about a poor girl in whom the whole town of Saumur takes an interest, and who, from a want of charity towards herself, does not lead a Christian life.”

“Indeed, monsieur le curé, you have come to me at a moment when I am quite incapable of bestowing a thought upon my neighbour, for my mind is completely absorbed with myself. I am most unhappy, and the only refuge I possess is the bosom of the Church, a bosom ample enough, indeed, to contain all our sorrows, and with a store of feeling sufficiently rich to allow us to draw upon it without fear of exhausting the supply.”

“Be it so, mademoiselle, for in directing our attention

towards the girl's case I spoke of, it is to yourself that our attention will have to be directed. Listen ! If you wish to be saved, there are but two courses open to you : either to quit the world, or to follow the laws the world has laid down ; to obey either your earthly or your heavenly destiny."

" Ah ! you speak to me at the very moment I longed to hear a fellow-creature's voice. Heaven, indeed, sends you to me, monsieur, at this moment. I am about to take my leave of the world, and live for Heaven alone in silence and seclusion."

" It is most essential, my daughter, that so wild a resolution should not be adopted inconsiderately. Marriage is a sacrament, the veil is a death."

" I know it, death, a speedy, an immediate death ! " she said with alarming rapidity.

" Death ! have you forgotten the great obligations you are called upon to fulfil towards society, mademoiselle ? Are you not the mother of those poor creatures who are clad by you, to whom you give firing in the winter and employment in the summer ? Your wealth is but a loan which must be duly rendered back, and holily have you accepted its trust. To bury yourself in a convent would be sheer egotism of feeling, and you would be wrong were you to remain unmarried all your life. In the first place, could you, alone and unaided, manage your immense fortune ? You would probably lose it. In a short time you would be beset by a thousand lawsuits, and would find yourself involved in a series of inextricable difficulties. Rely upon what your pastor tells you ; a husband is necessary for your position ; you

ought to preserve what Heaven has blessed you with. I speak to you as to a dearly-loved member of my flock. You are too sincerely devoted to Heaven to omit the fulfilment of your duty in a world of which you are one of the brightest ornaments, and on which you confer such holy examples."

At this moment Madame de Grassins was announced ; —the thirst for vengeance, and the incentive for an ardent hope, were the motives of her visit.

"Mademoiselle," she said. "Ah! you are here, monsieur le curé. I shall say nothing then; I came to talk about business to you, and I perceive you are engaged in deep consultation."

"Madame," said the curé, "I will leave the coast clear for you."

"Pray, monsieur le curé, return in a few minutes; your aid and countenance are indeed most necessary for me just now."

"Indeed it is, my poor child," said Madame de Grassins.

"What do you mean?" asked Mademoiselle Grandet and the curé, in a breath.

"Do you suppose I am not aware of your cousin's return, and of his marriage with Mademoiselle d'Aubrion? A woman never keeps her wits in her pocket."

Eugénie coloured and remained silent; but she adopted the course of affecting for the future the same impassible countenance which her father had known so well how to assume.

"Well, madame," she replied with irony, "it is most probable that I, at least, keep my wits in my pocket,

for I am at a loss to understand your meaning. You can speak before monsieur le curé ; you know he is my director."

"Very well, mademoiselle, read what De Grassins writes to me."

Eugénie read the following letter :—

"MY DEAR WIFE,

"Charles Grandet has arrived from the Indies. He has been at Paris for the last month——"

"A month !" said Eugénie to herself, letting her hand fall down by her side. She continued the letter :—

"I was obliged to dance attendance on him twice, before I was able to speak to this future Comte d'Aubrion. Although all Paris is talking about his marriage, and although the banns are published——"

He wrote to me, then, at the moment when—said Eugénie to herself. She did not finish what she was about to say, she did not exclaim, as many a Parisian lady would have done : *The scoundrel*, but her contempt was not the less thorough because it had remained unexpressed.

"This marriage," the letter went on to say, "is far from being concluded ; the Marquis d'Aubrion will not give his daughter to the son of a bankrupt. I went to see him to point out to him the extreme attention which his uncle and myself had devoted to his father's affairs, and the clever manœuvres by which we had been able to keep the creditors quiet hitherto. Would you believe

that the impertinent young fellow had the face to tell me, me who, for five years, had devoted myself night and day to his interests, and the conservation of his honour, *that his father's affairs were not his?* A professional man would be justified in claiming a sum of thirty or forty thousand francs as a commission of one per cent. upon the amount of the creditors' claims. But, wait a minute ! there is strictly owing to the creditors about two millions of francs, and I am going to declare his father's estate bankrupt. I embarked in this affair upon the word of that old crocodile Grandet, and I made certain promises in the name of the family. If M. le Comte d'Aubignon is not over particular about his own honour, mine at least interests me a good deal ; and so I shall forthwith explain my position to the creditors. However, I have too much respect for Mademoiselle Eugénie, with whom, in more fortunate days, we had hoped to have formed a closer connection, to act until you have spoken to her about this affair——”

At this moment Eugénie coldly handed back the letter without finishing it.

“ I thank you,” she said to Madame de Gressins ; “ we will see about it ! ”

“ Your voice sounds exactly like that of your dead father's,” said Madame de Grassins.

“ Madame,” said Nanon to her, “ you have 8,100 francs in gold to hand us over.”

“ Just so ; will you have the goodness to come with me, Madame Cornoiller ? ”

“ Monsieur le curé,” said Eugénie, with a noble self-

possession, with which the thought she was about to express inspired her, "would it be regarded as a sin if a woman were to remain a virgin though she became a wife?"

"That is a case affecting the conscience, with the solution of which I do not pretend to be acquainted. If you wish to learn what the celebrated Sanchez thinks of the point in his article *De Matrimonio*, I shall be able to inform you to-morrow."

Whereupon the curé withdrew.

Mademoiselle Grandet went upstairs to her father's study, where she passed the entire day, refusing to leave it even at the dinner hour, notwithstanding Nanon's entreaties. In the evening, however, she made her appearance, at the hour when her friends usually assembled. Never had Grandet's salon been so filled as it was during that evening. The news of Charles's return, and of his act of perfidy towards his cousin, had been circulated through the town. But, however observant was the curiosity of her visitors, it remained ungratified. Eugénie, who had expected it, did not allow her face to reveal the slightest indication of the bitter feelings which agitated her. She forced herself to assume a smiling expression of countenance when she replied to those who seemed desirous of showing the interest they felt either by their solemn looks or equally solemn words. In fact, she knew perfectly well how to conceal her own unhappiness under the guise of politeness. Towards nine o'clock, the games were finished, and the players quitted the tables where they had been playing, settled their accounts with one another, and talked over the last

tricks at whist as they joined those who were engaged in conversation. But, at the very moment the assembled guests rose to take their leave, an unexpected circumstance occurred, which resounded throughout the whole of Saumur, thence found its way into the arrondissement, and spread as far as the four contiguous préfectures.

"Stay, Monsieur le Président," said Eugénie to Monsieur de Bonfons, as she saw him take up his walking-stick.

At this remark there was hardly a single person in the room who was not, to some extent at least, slightly overcome. The President changed colour, and was obliged to sit down.

"The President will have the eleven millions!" said Mademoiselle de Gribaucourt.

"It's clear enough the President de Bonfons will marry Mademoiselle Grandet," exclaimed Madame d'Orsouval.

"That is the best trick in the game," said the abbé.

"Four by honours and the odd trick," said the notary.

Every one made a remark or a little joke on the occasion, and all beheld the heiress elevated upon her eleven millions as upon a pedestal. The drama, which had begun at nine o'clock, was approaching its termination. To desire the President, in the face of all Saumur, to remain, was almost the same as an announcement that she intended to take him as her husband! In small towns the *convenances* of society are so strictly observed, that an infraction of them of the character we have alluded to, is as effectual as the most solemn promise.

“Monsieur le Président,” said Eugénie to him, in an agitated tone of voice, when they were alone, “I am aware what it is that I possess which pleases you in me. Swear to leave me free during my whole life, not to require from me any of the duties which marriage imposes, and my hand is yours. Oh!” she continued, seeing him about to kneel down, “I have not said all yet. I should be wrong to deceive you, monsieur. My heart is filled with regard which it is impossible to eradicate. Friendship will be the only feeling I can bestow on my husband. I do not wish to offend him, nor do I wish to contravene the dictates of my own heart. But you will never possess my hand and my fortune, except on the condition of rendering me an immense service.”

“I am ready to do your bidding in everything,” said the President.

“Here are two millions and several hundred thousand francs, Monsieur le Président,” she said, drawing some papers out of her bosom; “set off for Paris, not to-morrow, nor to-night even, but at this very moment. Go to Monsieur de Grassins, learn the names of my uncle’s creditors, call a meeting of them, pay everything that they can possibly be entitled to, capital and interest at five per cent. from the date of the debt until the day of its repayment, and see that you obtain legal receipts for the same in proper form. You are a magistrate, and I rely upon you alone in this affair. You are an honourable and upright man and upon the faith of your word, I will traverse the dangers of this life under the shelter of your name. We shall entertain a mutual indulgence for each other, for we have been acquainted for so long a

period, that we almost are relations, and if you would not wish to render me unhappy I know."

The President fell at the feet of the wealthy heiress, his heart throbbing with mingled feelings of joy and anguish.

"I will be your slave!" he said to her.

"As soon as you have procured the receipts, monsieur," she resumed, casting a cold look at him, "you will take them to Charles Grandet, and hand him this letter. On your return, I shall be ready to fulfil my promise."

The President perfectly understood that he was indebted for Mademoiselle Grandet's hand to a disappointment in love; and he did his utmost, therefore, to carry out the orders he had received with the greatest promptitude, to prevent the possibility of a reconciliation between the two lovers. No sooner had he left, than Eugénie threw herself in her chair and burst into a passion of tears. The die was cast.

The President took post horses, and arrived in Paris on the following evening. In the morning of the day after his arrival, he went to see De Grassins. The banker called a meeting of the creditors at the office of the notary, where the documents on which their claims were founded had been deposited, and not a single creditor omitted to attend the summons. Although they were creditors, we must render them the justice to say that they were exact; and the President de Bonfons, in the name of the Grandet family, thereupon paid them the amount of principal and interest due. This incident was regarded by the commercial world in Paris as one of the most extraordinary events of the epoch. When the

receipts in full were duly registered, and De Grassins had been recompensed for the trouble he had had by the gift of a sum of fifty thousand francs which Eugénie had allowed him, the President went to the Hôtel d'Aubrion, where he found Charles, who had just returned to his own room, after having been overwhelmed by the bitter representations of his father-in-law. The old marquis had declared, in the most positive manner, that his daughter should never be his, until all the claims of Guillaume Grandet's creditors had been discharged.

The President's first act was to hand him the following letter :—

“ MY COUSIN,

“ Monsieur le Président de Bonfons has undertaken to hand you the receipts of the various debts owing by my uncle. I have heard a bankruptcy spoken of; but I thought that the son of a bankrupt would perhaps be unable to marry Mademoiselle d'Aubrion. Yes, cousin, you have formed a correct opinion of my mind and of my manners; I very likely possess none of the requisites for society; I am ignorant of the calculations of the world, and know nothing of its habits or customs, nor could you derive from me that pleasure which you seek in it. Be happy, in accordance with those social conventions to which you sacrifice our first affections. To render your happiness complete, I can only offer you the honour of your father. Adieu, you will always find a faithful friend in your cousin,

“ EUGÉNIE G.”

The President smiled at the exclamation which his ambitious companion could not repress at the moment when the receipts were handed over to him.

"We can announce our marriage reciprocally," he said.

"Ah! you are going to marry Eugénie, then? I am very happy to hear it, she is a good-hearted girl. But," he continued, as if suddenly struck by a bright idea, "is she rich?"

"She was worth," replied the President in a tone of banter, "eleven millions, four days ago; but she has no more than nine millions now."

Charles looked at the President as if thunder-struck.

"Nine—mil——"

"Yes, nine millions, monsieur. Mademoiselle Grandet's income will, together with my own, amount to three hundred thousand livres a year."

"My dear cousin," said Charles, having recovered a little of his assurance, "we shall be able to push each other on in the world."

"Just so," said the President. "But there is one thing more," he added: "here is a small box, which I was to deliver to no one but to yourself."

And he placed on the table the casket which contained the dressing-case.

"Well, my dear friend," said Madame la Marquise d'Aubrion, as she entered without paying any attention to Cruchot, "don't annoy yourself in any way about what poor Monsieur d'Aubrion said to you just now, for the Duchesse de Margency has completely turned his head. I repeat, nothing shall prevent your marriage."

"Nothing, madame," replied Charles. "The three millions which were formerly owing by my father were paid off yesterday."

"In money?" she said.

"Entirely, principal and interest."

"What an absurdity!" exclaimed the mother-in-law.

"Who is this gentleman?" she whispered to her son-in-law, when she perceived Cruchot.

"My man of business," he replied in a low tone of voice.

She bowed in a disdainful manner to Monsieur de Bonfons, and left the room.

"We are helping each other already," said the President, taking up his hat. "Adieu, cousin!"

"I almost think that fellow is laughing at me. I've a very great mind to give him six inches of cold steel through his body."

The President left Paris, and, on his return to Saumur three days afterwards, he publicly announced his marriage with Eugénie, and six months later he was nominated Counsellor of the Cour Royale of Angers.

Before leaving Saumur, Eugénie had the jewels, which, in her heart, she had so warmly cherished, melted down, and, together with the eight thousand francs which she had received from her cousin, had them made into a golden vessel for the purpose of holding the consecrated elements, and presented it to the church where she had so frequently implored Divine Providence for him. She passed her time between Angers and Saumur. Her husband having displayed great devotedness in a certain

political affair, became President of the Chamber, and then, finally, at the end of three years, First President. He awaited the general election with great impatience, in order to procure a seat in the Chamber. He already began to look with a longing eye on the peerage, and then—then——

“Why, then, the king will be his cousin?” said Nanon, La Grande Nanon, Madame Cornoiller, householder in the town of Saumur.

Monsieur le President de Bonfons (for he had at last discarded the patronymic of Cruchot) did not succeed in any of his ambitious ideas. He died a week after having been nominated deputy of Saumur. Heaven, whose eye nothing escapes, and who never strikes without a cause, punished him, doubtlessly, for his cold-blooded, calculating spirit, and for the legal ability with which he had so carefully drawn up the marriage settlement, wherein each of the contracting parties had agreed to give to the other, *in case there should be no issue of the marriage, the whole undivided share of his or her real and personal property, without excepting or reserving anything whatever, in full and absolute ownership, dispensing even with the formality of any schedule thereof, and providing that the omission of the said schedule should not in any way interfere with the succession of their heirs or assigns, it being understood that the said donation should be, &c. &c. &c.*

This clause may possibly explain the profound respect which the President invariably testified for the wishes of Madame de Bonfons, and for her desire to live apart.

The members of her own sex cited the First President as one of the most delicate-minded and considerate of men, pitied him, and went so far as frequently to speak ill of Eugénie among themselves for her extreme dejection, as well as for the affection she still treasured up for another ; but to speak ill of her, be it understood, as women alone are capable of doing, namely, with the utmost refinement of cruelty.

“ Madame la Présidente de Bonfons must be a very great sufferer to be obliged to live apart from her husband. Poor little creature ! Will she get well soon ? What is the matter with her ? Has she cancer ? Why does she not see a physician ? Her complexion has become very yellow for some time past ; she ought to go and consult some of the celebrities of Paris. What can possibly be her reason for not wishing to have a child ? She is very fond of her husband, people say ; why not present him with an heir, then, considering the position he occupies ? Do you not think it is shameful ? And if it arise from any fancied caprice, her conduct is exceedingly blameable. Poor President ! ”

Endowed with the refined tact of those who lead a solitary life, which has been acquired, too, as well by unwearied meditations as by the exquisite delicacy of perception with which they grasp at objects falling within the range of their sphere, Eugénie, in her turn, schooled by misfortune and by her late education into a clear insight into everything, knew that the President was anxious for her death, that he might find himself the uncontrolled possessor of that immense fortune, which had been still further augmented by the two millions left

by his uncle the notary and his uncle the *abbé*, whom it had pleased Heaven to summon from this world. The poor recluse pitied the President. Providence avenged her for the sordid calculations of which she had been made the object ; for the infamous indifference of a husband, who respected, as the strongest guarantee he could possess, the hopeless passion which Eugénie so fondly cherished. If she were to give birth to a child, it would be the destruction of all his egotistical hopes, of all his ambitious views and expectations ! Heaven, then, poured untold treasures into the lap of this poor prisoner, to whom gold was an object of indifference, whose ardent aspirations were longingly directed towards heaven itself, who lived pious and good amidst holy thoughts, and who secretly and ceaselessly succoured misfortune and relieved distress.

Madame de Bonfons was left a widow at thirty-seven years of age, with a revenue amounting to four hundred thousand livres a year, still beautiful, but with the beauty of a woman approaching forty years of age. Her face was pale, calm and placid in expression ; her voice, soft and gentle ; her manners quiet and unaffected. She possessed all the exalted qualities which grief develops, the sanctity of one whose soul has remained pure and unsullied from contact with the world ; but she had a certain stiffness of manner which characterizes old maids, and the close and contracted views and habits which are inseparable from the narrowed existence of a provincial life.

In spite of her four hundred thousand livres a year she lived as the poor Eugénie Grandet had always lived ;

never had the fire in her room lighted except on the particular days when her father formerly allowed her to light a fire in the *salle*, and discontinued fires in due conformity with the programme which existed in full force in her youthful days. She invariably dressed as her mother used to dress. The house at Saumur, a house without light or warmth, always wrapped in deep gloom, cheerless and sombre, was the image of the life she led.

She accumulated her income with the greatest care, and might, perhaps, have been deemed parsimonious, did she not negative so slanderous a charge by the noble employment she made of her fortune. Various pious and charitable foundations, an hospital for the aged and schools for the young, a public library munificently endowed, spoke in loud testimony year after year against the existence of that avarice of which certain persons suspected her. To her were the churches of Saumur indebted for various restorations and improvements. She inspired, everywhere, a respect almost religious in its character. Her noble heart, a heart whose every throb was inspired by the tenderest of feelings, was destined to be subjected to the petty calculations of human interests; money was fated to communicate its chilling influence to that heavenly life, and to make her regard with suspicion and distrust all human affections.

“You are the only one who loves me!” she said to Nanon.

It was the hand of this poor woman which staunched the secret wounds of every family around her. She bent her upward course toward heaven, accompanied by the crown of benefits she had conferred. The greatness of

her soul redeemed her deficiency of education and the habits of her early life. Such is the history of Eugénie Grandet, who, though living in the world, is not of the world; who, though constituted to be, greatly and gloriously, both wife and mother, has neither husband, nor child, nor family of her own.

Latterly the question of a new marriage for her has been discussed. The people of Saumur are busying themselves greatly about her and M. le Marquis de Froidfond, whose family already begins to beset the rich widow in precisely the same way the Cruchots used to do.

Nanon and Cornoiller, it is rumoured, are in the marquis's-interest, though nothing can be more untrue; for neither La Grande Nanon nor Cornoiller has wit or intelligence enough to understand the corruptions of the world.

THE END.

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